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AN

EXHORTATION

TO THE

INHABITANTS

Of the PROVINCE of

SOUTH-CAROLINA,

to bring their DEEDS to the Light of CHRIST, in their own Consciences.

By *S. H.*

In which is inserted,

An ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR's EXPERIENCE in the IMPORTANT BUSINESS of RELIGION.

who commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face (or Appearance) *of* JESUS CHRIST, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

We also believe, and therefore speak, 2 Cor. iv. 13.

That which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes---- and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you, 1 John i. 1. 3.

PHILADELPHIA:

1747

An EXHORTATION to the INHABITANTS of *South-Carolina*, &c.

My Friends and Neighbours,

AFTER an Abſence of near ſix Years from this Province (my native Country) and my Arrival among you, I have beheld the Faces of many of the Inhabitants whom I have known, and been known to, ſome Years: But the Novelty of my religious Sentiments, and Meanneſs of my Appearance, has, I find, render'd me deſpicable in your Eyes; which has been obvious, when a few of us, called *Quakers*, have met to worſhip the Supreme Being in a Manner agreeable to the beſt of our Underſtanding and Knowledge: And tho' ſome perhaps may ſtile our Principles * and Tenets by the hard Name of *Hereſy*, and our Mode or Manner of Worſhip, ridiculous or abſurd; nevertheleſs, we are humbly of Opinion, they are neither *unſcriptural* nor *unchriſtian*, having, as we think, the Sanction and Authority of our Lord himſelf, the Example of primitive Believers, and right Reaſon, on our Side.

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* Any Perſon who deſire to be informed of the Principles of the *Quakers*, is referred to *Robert Barclay's Apology*, ſince I find we are oftentimes condemned unheard. *But he that anſwereth a Matter before he heareth it, it is Folly and Shame unto him*, Prov. xviii. 13. The *Apology* may be had at *Mary Blamyer's*, in *Charles-Town*.

But notwithſtanding, as I have noted, that I have ſuffered your Ridicule and Reproach, as I am conſcious it is for no other than Obedience to the Will of my Heavenly Maſter, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve, I am willing to become more vile in your Eyes; which, it is more than probable, I ſhall appear, when I expoſe the following Lines to your Obſervation and Cenſure. I would not have you imagine that any Conſideration, leſs than his Favour, could have prevailed with me to have appeared thus publickly in Print, or otherwiſe; for could I, with any eaſe to my own Mind, have evaded this, or been excuſed from returning to this Place (as I apprehended it required of me by the Almighty) you had never beheld my Face in the Province, much leſs any Performance of this Sort in publick. I am not inſenſible, that the Reaſon I have offered for writing, as well as the Subject itſelf, may probably be conſidered as the Production of a diſtemper'd and enthuſiaſtick Brain; as it is poſſible, on ſuch a novel and uncommon Occaſion, as a Woman's appearing on the Behalf of God and Religion, you may (as others have done in the like Circumſtances) be induced to conſider ſuch an One under ſome unaccountable Deluſion, or affected with religious Madneſs; and more eſpecially, as the Things recommended to your Conſideration, are offered by a ſimple Female of your own Country: Some, in this Caſe, I expect, will afford me a Smile of Contempt, while others (acted by a more generous Paſſion) pity my Folly and kindly wiſh me a Return of my Senſes: But how-

however this may be, I have considered, that from the earliest Ages of Christianity, and indeed in all preceeding Time, those who refused to conform to the Usage and wicked Customs of the Age, and lived a self-denying Life, " Their " Lives were counted Madness by the World, " and their End to be without Honour:" Not considering that Religious Minds despise and contemn all worldly Honour, and earthly preferment, seeking that only which comes from God, and which he is pleased to distinguish those by, who honour him (by walking in Conformity to his Laws and Precepts) as he himself declares, *Those who honour me, I will honour; but those who despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.*

But before I proceed to what the Title-page mentions, I shall premise one Proposition, on which all I have to offer will greatly depend, *viz. That all Mankind have a Measure and Manifestation of the Light, Spirit, or Grace of God, given them to profit withal.* This Doctrine of the universal Extent of the Grace of God, the People called *Quakers*, hold in a peculiar Manner, and are distinguished by, from some other dissenting Sects, who generally limit God's Gifts of his Holy Spirit, or saving Means, to what they call *The Elect*; and assert, that the rest of Mankind are (as they term it) *passed by*, or denied the Means of Salvation, being * predestinated from all Eternity to Destruction.

However, we say that this Gift of the Holy Spirit, or Grace of God, is bestowed on all Man-

* To refute the Doctrine of *Predestination*, read Doctor *Whitby* on the *New-Testament*; and his Discourses on the *Five Controverted Points*; which may be had of *John Whitter*, on *James's Island*.

Mankind without Exception, agreeable to the Assertion of the Apostle *Paul*; *The Grace of God, which brings Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, and the World's Lusts, we should live righteously, soberly and godly, in this present World.* But tho' all Men have received this Talent of Grace, or Manifestation of the Spirit of Christ, all are not saved, as Men may rebel against, or quench the Spirit; and, by frustrating its Motions, render it ineffectual. Under the Law it is said, *The Almighty gave of his good Spirit to the* Jews *to instruct them, but they rebelled against it*, Nehemiah ix. 20. And the Prophet *Isaiah* also tells us, *They rebelled, and vexed God's Holy Spirit.* And, under the Gospel, the Apostle *Paul* cautions the *Thessalonians* against *quenching the Spirit*, or extinguishing the Light, and hindering the consuming Force, that would destroy Sin and Iniquity in the Heart.

Thus, according to the Testimony I have offered, and many I might produce, all Men have received a Proportion of Light and Grace, but all have not obey'd its Leadings; all have heard, but all have not obey'd: However, this internal Monitor or Director, is ready on all Occasions (if we will apply to it for Knowledge and Help) to instruct us in our Duty, and assist us in overcoming the Temptations of the great Adversary of our Soul's Happiness; but we must diligently attend to its Voice, and not only hear, but obey its Instructions, that our Souls may live.

But

But ſome have ſaid to me, *We grant that Chriſtians ought to walk agreeable to the Dictates of the Spirit of Chriſt*; *but the* Quakers *make the Guidance and Direction of the Spirit neceſſary in trivial and indifferent Matters*; *nay, ſometimes they offer its Dictates as a Reaſon for many Things accounted by us irrational and abſurd.*---I anſwer; With Reference to our Duty and Obedience to the Almighty, I conſider no Action indifferent; every Thing of this Nature muſt tend to ſome Purpoſe, good or evil: And 'tis upon this Conſideration that we extend the Doctrine of the Croſs, Self-denial and perfect Obedience to the Precepts of Chriſt, farther then the Generality of thoſe who profeſs the Chriſtian Name: And I take this Occaſion to ſay, my principal Errand among you is to recommend, as far as I am enabled, theſe Chriſtian Doctrines; ſince our Lord himſelf poſitively declares, *That unleſs we take up a daily Croſs*, (to our Corrupt Wills and Affections) *we cannot be his Diſciples*: And farther, to adviſe you to a ſtrict Adherence to the Light or Grace of God in your own Conſciences or Underſtandings, as unto *a more ſure Word of Prophecy*, or perfect Director; *whereunto you will do well to take Heed, as unto a light ſhining in a dark Place*: For the Nations of them that are ſaved, muſt walk in this Light of the Lord.

But it may be objected, "That many of the People called *Quakers*, have anciently bore Teſtimony to thoſe Doctrines, and continue ſo to do; then what need of my feeble Teſtimony or Evidence?" 'Tis true that numerous Pens have been employed, and many earneſt Endeavours,

vours, and fervent Desires of this People, to recommend and propagate (as far as they are enabled by divine Assistance) those Christian Doctrines, which they have proved by their own happy Experience to be so beneficial and advantageous to themselves; and being thro' Grace made partakers of that Charity or Love, which is the Bond of Perfection, and the Characteristick of a genuine and real Christian; these, I say, by this Gospel-love, are excited to wish well to all Mankind, and, as much as in them lies, they endeavour to serve one another in it, as the Apostle exhorts, *Gal.* v. 13. And their frequent Supplications ascend to the most High, on behalf of Mankind in general, that all People may come to the Knowledge of the Truth, as it is in JESUS, and be saved. And when our Hearts are thus enlarged, both to God, and one towards another, then are our Mouths opened to declare of his wonderful Works to the Children of Men, and shew forth his mighty Acts, which he is able and ready to perform, by the powerful Operation of his Holy Spirit in our Hearts, in subduing every evil and inordinate Desire and Affection, and bringing them under his Government, and into Subjection to his divine Will; and by speaking well of his great Name, to invite and encourage others to *come taste and see that the Lord is good*, and to partake of his Offer of great Salvation, no less than the Redemption of the Soul (by *Jesus Christ*) from the Bondage of Sin and Satan. And indeed the Peace that flows from, and the Promises annexed, to a perfect Obedience

Obedience to the righteous Laws of God, are ſufficient Inducements to excite us to a godly, righteous, and Self-denying Life; for as the royal *Pſalmiſt* greatly experienced formerly, ſo we at this Day experience, and ſubſcribe to this Truth, That in keeping the Commandments of God there is great Reward; and that great Peace have they who love his Law, and nothing ſhall offend them: *For He ſpeaks Peace to his People, and to his Saints; but let them not turn again to Folly*, Pſalm lxxxv. 8. *And the Lord will ordain Peace for the Righteous, for the Effect of Righteouſneſs is Peace and Aſſurance for ever*, Iſaiah xxxii. 17. Agreeable to this our Lord tells his Diſciples, *My Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you; not as the World giveth*, but a Peace which paſſeth the Underſtanding of the carnal Man. And the Apoſtle *Paul*, to encourage and excite the *Romans* to the Obedience of the Faith deliver'd, and a patient Continuance in Well-doing, tells them, Their Reward ſhould be, *Glory, Honour, and Peace, to every Man that worketh Good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile*, Rom. ii. 10. But, on the contrary, that thoſe who are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Their Portion will be *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man that doeth Evil*—as there is no Peace to the Wicked; for what have they to do with Peace, ſo long as they continue in Diſobedience? Indeed the Wicked may, as they often do, cry Peace to themſelves, when there is no Peace, or at leaſt not a ſolid One; as a real and ſubſtan-

tial Peace and Happineſs, can only reſult from an Acquaintance with God, and the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience: But a falſe and polluted Reſt and Peace, which many are erecting to themſelves, will deſtroy them with a ſore Deſtruction, without timely Repentance and Amendment of Life; *for inſtead of this Peace, they ſhall have great Bitterneſs*, Iſaiah xxxviii. 17.

Many and ſingular are the Advantages and Priviledges which I might enumerate, that attend a Life of Piety and Holineſs, no leſs than an Hundred-fold of Peace in our Boſoms in this Life, and the great and precious Promiſe of Life Eternal in the World to come. And as I have, by the Grace of God, and thro' Obedience of Faith, witneſſed in Degree this Peace from God, (which is beyond the Conception of thoſe who have never enjoyed it) I became greatly concerned for Mankind in general, and in a particular Manner for the Inhabitants of my native Country, that they might witneſs this Peace; and I often petitioned the Almighty, that he would in his wonted Mercy diſcover to you the Things that belong to your Soul's Peace, before they might, by Unbelief, be hid from your Eyes. Having had this Concern for ſome Time on your Account, the Almighty was pleaſed to lay a Conſtraint upon me to declare it among you. This, and what follows, I am ſenſible will ſound as idle and ridiculous Tales in the Ears of many; however, I ſhall go on to tell you, that I conſider myſelf as a very feeble Inſtrument in the Cauſe of God, and one of the leaſt Servants in my

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Master's House. I have also consider'd, how backward the Generality of People are to receive Advice, even when it has been offered by religious, pious and learned Men; and that the Labours of such have had but little Effect on the Minds and Conduct of many called Christians; and reflecting on the greatness of my Inability, as well as the Improbability of my being serviceable in God's Cause, I have been induced to say, *Lord! who will believe my Report, since so many have labour'd (as I have thought) in vain? Shall I, a poor Female, undertake for God? Can I presume to come up to his Help against the great Adversary of Souls? No surely; rather, I beseech thee, appear in the Glory of thy Majesty, and by the immediate Act of thy mighty Power, in the Hearts of the People, subdue and lay waste the strong Holds of Sin and Satan! And in the Room thereof establish, I beseech thee, the Kingdom and Dominion of thy dear Son, our Lord, whose Right alone it is to reign in the Hearts of the People, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!* And farther, tho' I am but Dust and Ashes, I thus presumed to excuse myself; *Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast been pleased to discover thy Will to me.* But to an Almighty Power, who doth according to his righteous Will, both in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, who shall say, What dost thou? And since he is pleased to send by the Hand of whom he will send, I no longer resisted his Will, but became obedient to his Word and Power, against which I

had long reaſoned, and objected my Unfitneſs; tho' the Apoſtle *Paul* informs us, *That as many as have been baptized into* CHRIST (or with his Baptiſm of Fire and the Holy Ghoſt, and have witneſſed the chaffy Nature in them conſumed, and by this Means) *have put on* CHRIST (that then there is no Diſtinction or Difference among Chriſtians in a religious Senſe) *there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female: For*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ye are all one in* CHRIST JESUS. Thus he ſeems to allow our Sex the ſame Goſpel Priviledges with the reſt of Mankind. And the royal Prophet calls on the female, as well as the male Part of God's rational Creation, to celebrate the Praiſe of our common Governor and Benefactor. "Why then, ſays one, ſhould Woman be denied her Canticle of Praiſe in the general Chorus, ſince out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings God will ſtill ordain and perfect Praiſe?" And we may further obſerve, when the Tabernacle of the Lord was erected in the Wilderneſs, the Women, we are told, who were willing hearted, brought their Free-will Offerings, and preſented them towards the Building, or at leaſt embelliſhing of this moveable Temple, which, 'tis ſaid, was a Type of the true Church militant, and the Tabernacle which God has pitched, and not Man. And if Females were allowed to aſſiſt and contribute to the Work of the Lord, under the Law, why ſhould any, or the leaſt Eſſay towards the repairing the Breaches in God's Building, be rejected under the

the Gospel; since we do not offer or propose any new Doctrine, nor endeavour to lay any other Foundation than that which is already laid, *viz*, "The Revelation of the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST the Righteous, in the Soul of Man, on which the Church of CHRIST is founded and built: Nor for the moral Disorders so visible among the Professors of Christianity, do we prescribe new or untry'd Remedies; but having experienced the Virtue and Efficacy of the old, we, in great Love and Good-will, endeavour to persuade you to apply them: For the same Fountain of Purgation is now open to Sinners, that was in Ages past set open for the House of *David*, and Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, for Sin and for Uncleanness; for the Almighty is not only the God of the *Jews*, but of the *Gentiles* also.

But to proceed; I have told you that this Voyage to my native Place, was undertaken in Pursuance of what I verily believed was the Will of God concerning me, and required of me by him (I make no Doubt) as one amongst the many Trials I have been exercised with, of my Faith, Love and Obedience; wherein I believe it my Duty openly and freely to confess CHRIST before Men, whose operating Power on my Heart I had fearfully and cowardly endeavoured to conceal before I left this Province; and I take this Occasion to declare to you, that I am not ashamed of the Gospel of CHRIST, which I have in Measure experienced to be the Power of God to Salvation to all them who believe, and continue to obey it;

it: And the more numerous the Teſtimonies, and greater the Cloud of Witneſſes, to the Efficacy of the Grace and Power of God, the more will the Truths and Evidences propoſed and produded, be ſtrengthened and corroborated. But ſome may poſſibly ask, 'How I certainly know that I am not miſtaken, and that inſtead of being led by the Spirit of Truth, I am not deceived by the Spirit of Error?" To ſuch I anſwer; I have one Rule to ſquare my Actions by, which never yet fail'd me, when I applied it; and that is, By Application to the Divine Being, that He would be pleaſed to preſerve me from Error and Deluſion, I examine, by his Divine Light and Aſſiſtance, the Motive, Deſign, Tendency and End of my Actions; and if I find nothing repugnant to, or inconſiſtent with the Honour of God, and Scripture Precepts or Teſtimony, I make a rational Concluſion, that I am ſafe at leaſt. And tho' I do not obſerve from Scripture, that it is my particular Duty to exhort you to yours; nor do I gather from thence, that I ought to declare, in this publick Manner, of the Goodneſs, Mercy and Loving-kindneſs, of the Almighty, to all who ſeek his Face and Favour in Truth, Sincerity and Uprightneſs; yet I find it there, my Duty to obey all God's Commands; and that the Almighty may, and does, lay particular Injuctions, and ſpecial Commands, upon his Servants, by the Divine Direction of his Holy Spirit, at this Day, as well as in former Ages, I firmly believe: And that the Bleſſing our Lord promiſed to confer on

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his immediate Followers, extends as well to all his ſucceeding Diſciples, *viz.* "That he would pray the Father, and he will (ſays he) ſend you another Comforter, that may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, who will guide and lead you into all Truth, and ſhew you Things to come; for he that dwelleth with you, ſhall be in you; and this Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall teach you all Things and bring all Things to your Remembrance." And the Apoſtle *Peter*, at that memorable Time, when he was preaching to People of various Languages, tells his Audience, firſt quoting a Paſſage from the Prophet *Joel*, Acts ii. 38. *It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt* (or Goſpel) *Days, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all Fleſh, and your Sons and your Daughters ſhall prophecy*, &c. And he ſubjoins, *Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of* JESUS CHRIST, *for the Remiſſion of Sins, and ye ſhall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt: For the Promiſe is to you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call. And to you, O Men, he calls, his Voice is to the Sons of Men*, Prov. viii. 4. And we may further obſerve, That the Spirit of CHRIST was not limited to his immediate Diſciples, to whom it was to be ſent as a Comforter and Director; but he tells them, it ſhould appear to the World of Unbelievers in another Adminiſtration or Office, *viz.* That of a Reprover for Sin. *For when CHRIST aſcended up on high, he gave Gifts to Men, yea, even to the Rebellious*, Eph. iv. 8. And the Gifts of the Holy

Holy Ghoſt, *Poole*, in his *Annotations*, tells us, "Was not, as ſome imagine, confined to the Apoſtle's Days, but that Chriſtians, in ſucceeding Ages, received as large Proportions of the Divine Influences and Gifts of the Holy Spirit as formerly." And that Females did receive theſe Gifts, as well as the Men, and on proper Occaſions did exerciſe them, *John Locke*, in his *Paraphraſe* on *Paul*'s Epiſtles, aſſures us, by Proof. He tells us, "That God, for Order ſake, had inſtituted in the World a proper Subordination of the weaker Sex to the ſtronger; yet (ſays he) this hindered not but that he might make uſe of the weaker Sex to any Function, whenever he thought fit, as well as he did the Men." He ſays much more to the ſame Purpoſe; but I leave him to thoſe who may have an Opportunity and Inclination to read him further on this Subject*; and return to illuſtrate, as well as I am able, the Rule of my Conduct in religious Matters. I am ſenſible that it is my Duty, firſt and principally, and above all other Conſiderations, to love, adore, honour and obey, the Supreme Being; and next, I find it my Duty to love my Neighbour as myſelf; and to obſerve to act in the ſame juſt and upright Manner in every Circumſtance, that I deſire he ſhould act in towards myſelf: Therefore, if, upon a Scrutiny, or Examination, I find my Deſign or Action directly or indirectly tending to the Diſhonour of God, or in any Shape injurious to my Neighbour, I am immediately inſtructed, by

* Locke, on 2 Corinthians 14.

by the inward Monitor, or Light of CHRIST in my Conſcience, to decline it; and if I forbear the Action, &c. I believe you will grant I am right ſo far. Again, if I apprehend I am directed or commanded to do any particular Thing; if, upon Trial, by the above Rule, it bears the Teſt, and has any Tendency to promote God's Honour, Peace, Good-will, Charity and Benevolence to my Neighbour, I believe I am ſafe, and may venture to conclude that this Suggeſtion can proceed from no other than God; ſince it points to ſome ſmall Degree of Glory to his Name and Power. And further, any Deed that can ſtand this Trial, cannot poſſibly have it's Riſe, or be excited by a diabolical Spirit; ſince we have our Lord's Teſtimony to the Truth of this Aſſertion, *That if Satan riſe up againſt himſelf, and be divided, he cannot ſtand, but hath an End*, Mark iii. 26. But whatever Judgment may be made of my religious Sentiments and Conduct, it will be far from affecting me; my Peace and Happineſs in no wiſe depending on the Favour or Applauſe of Mortals, but on the Favour and Approbation of God, by whoſe juſt and deciſive Judgment I muſt ſtand or fall; for *God ſeeth not as Man ſeeth*, Man judging by the outward Appearance only; but the Lord looketh at the Heart. And tho' we are told, *The Heart is deceitful above all Things*; and the Prophet queries, *Who can know it?* The Almighty is pleaſed to declare in theſe Words, *I the Lord ſearch the Heart, and try the Reins; and behold he that formeth the Mountains, and*

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createth the Spirit, he declareth unto Man what his Thoughts are: Even he that maketh the Morning Darkneſs, and treadeth upon the high Places of the Earth, the Lord, the God of Hoſts is his Name, Amos iv. 13.

Further, I have thought you may poſſibly imagine, that in Pride and Arrogancy of Heart I am come to ſee, how you fare, with regard to your eternal Salvation: But, give me Leave to aſſure you, my Viſit proceeds from no ſuch evil Motive; neither have I any further Views than the Peace and Satisfaction that flows from a Conſciouſneſs of having done my Duty, in coming to proclaim the glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation among you, to all who will accept of it on God's Terms, *viz. Repentance and Amendment of Life.*

I have no particular Perſon in View, nor Deſign to offend any One living; and if at any time I ſhould expreſs myſelf a little warmly, my Zeal is aim'd againſt Sin, and the Irregularity of People's Lives in general; your Temporal, as well eternal Intereſt, I wiſh as well to, as I do to my own. I do not undertake to addreſs you in pompous Words, nor, where it in my Power, to pleaſe your Ear with fine Periods. The Laws of Method I know little of, therefore I don't attempt any Rule of that Sort; neither do I preſume to offer any Thing new on the Subject of Religion; but if one Line of my own ſhort Experience in the Things of God, may have the leaſt Tendency to excite ſome to the practical Part of Chriſtianity, or to mend the Heart of any One, I have my Reward;

ward; my honeſt Aim, as far as my weak Endeavour will allow, being the Promotion of God's Honour, and the Wellfare of my Neighbour; and, to borrow the Words of one of our Worthies, *I have no Plot or Deſign, but an ardent Wiſh for the Salvation of your Souls:* And, if I may be allowed to uſe the Words of the great Apoſtle *Paul*, I will further aſſure you, *I covet no Perſon's Silver, Gold or Apparel.* On the contrary, having ſeen and lamented the divers and hurtful Luſts I was obnoxious to, when I was in Poſſeſſion of a plentiful Eſtate, and that they that are rich fall into many Temptations; my Buſineſs is to warn and caution you that are rich, againſt the Miſapplication of your Wealth. Riches, attain'd lawfully, without Covetouſneſs, and too anxious a Deſire and Purſuit (which may obſtruct our godly Attainments) I grant, are one of the Bleſſings of Heaven, if rightly and properly applied; as they put us in a Capacity of providing a neceſſary Subſiſtence for our Families, and doing Acts of Juſtice and Mercy to our Neighbour: But then we muſt remember we are only Stewards of this, as well as every other Gift of God; and that we are as culpable in his Sight, and as accountable to his Juſtice, for the Waſte and Abuſe of Wealth, as for the ill Uſe of any other of his Favours and Mercies.

Some plead for Extravagance, Vanity and Luxury, in the abſurd Terms of an old Proverb, that thoſe *who win Gold, have a Right to wear it*; and that they may apply their own Money to what Purpoſes they pleaſe: Not

conſidering, that all temporal Bleſſings are only lent us, and that we can't properly call any Thing our own. And if we will but look about us, we ſhall ſee this Aſſertion greatly proved, by obſerving the many Viciſſitudes in this one Article of Wealth. Riches, metaphorically ſpeaking, take to themſelves Wings, and fly away from one to another, and that we are as often ſnatched from them, as they from us; a ſignificant Inſtance of which we have in our Saviour's Parable of the rich Man, who, having laid up much Goods for many Years, ſottiſhly addreſſes his Soul in theſe Words, *Soul, take thine Eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry*, Luke xii. 19. Thus being in this ſtupid Condition, blinded by the God of this World, he never once reflects on the Poſſibility of being deprived of his Idols by any Means whatſoever. But now obſerve the Equity and Juſtice of the Almighty in his Judgments, which he often inflicts on thoſe who adore the Gift, but deſpiſe and neglect the Giver; who receive of his Bounty, but fail to acknowledge it; who eat and drink, and riſe up to play: By one Stroke of his Juſtice he breaks the Inchantment this Man had been held in by Satan; diſcovers the Uncertainty of temporal Goods and Enjoyments, and the Vanity or Folly of truſting and placing our Happineſs in them; and, by the Word of his Power, he commands this poor, deluded Mortal to reſign, not only his Wealth, but his very Soul, to him that gave it; ſaying to him in theſe Terms, *Thou Fool, this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee; then whoſe ſhall theſe Things be which thou haſt provided?*

Melan-

Melancholly Situation indeed! and far worſe than if his Goods had been taken from him. This Man, as far as we may be allowed to judge by his Folly in this Inſtance, muſt be in a very unfit State and Condition for Heaven, where it does not appear he had been careful to lay up any Treaſure, *For where the Treaſure is, there will the Heart be alſo.* And in our Lord's Obſervations on this unhappy Perſon's Condition, he ſubjoins, *So* (or in ſuch a Caſe) *is he that layeth up Treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.*

But tho' I, as well as others, had received a Proportion or Talent of Grace in my Heart, for the great Purpoſes before named, yet I was not careful to improve it; and while I continued in neglect of my Duty, ſo long this Grace proved ineffectual, and in vain: But *the Gifts and Callings of God are without Repentance*, Rom. ii. 29. for tho' many may neglect to anſwer his Call, or improve his Gifts, nevertheleſs the Almighty repents not that he hath diſpenſed and beſtow'd them; but graciouſly condeſcends, by his frequent Viſitations, either immediately, or inſtrumentally, by Mercies, or by Judgments, to awaken, perſwade, excite or allure us to our Duty; and tho' in Time paſt we believed not God, who in Effect we are ſaid to deny, when we worſhip him not as God; yet he repents not that he hath called us, but repeats his Call to the Careleſs and Negligent; of which Number I was, when the Almighty, whoſe Compaſſion fails not, return'd to viſit my Soul. In this, the happieſt Seaſon

Seaſon of my Life, when the Time was come, wherein, thro' Mercy I obtain'd Mercy; and in which the Moſt High vouchſafed to favour me, by opening my Eyes, and diſcovering to me the Things that belonged to the everlaſting Peace and Happineſs of my Soul. And at the ſame time the Lord was pleaſed to diſplay his excellent Glory, and to give me a Sight of the Beauty of Holineſs; and then I could ſay, *I have heretofore only heard of Thee by the Hearing of the outward Ear.* But now mine Eye ſaw his glory: This amazing tho' lovely Appearance of God to my Soul, cauſed me many a time to bow down before the Majeſty of Heaven, and, indeed to abhor myſelf in Duſt and Aſhes, and frequently to mourn over him whom I had many time pierced and griev'd in his Holy Spirit, by my Vanities and Folly, in giving his Glory to Idols, and the Praiſe that was his Due, to the Imaginations of my own Heart. This was the firſt Day's Work of the new Creation in my Soul; the Almighty, by the Word of his Power, had commanded the Darkneſs to be divided from the Light, and, by this happy Medium, I continued to make new, and, to me, unuſual Diſcoveries; I ſaw that I had been an Alien from the Commonwealth of *ſpiritual Iſrael*, and a Stranger to the Covenant of Promiſe, having no Hope in *Chriſt*, as I had lived without God in the World; and, by neglecting to give that Honour due to his Name, I had forfeited the Favour of the Almighty, and that heavenly Paradiſe, which the Smiles of his Countenance and Preſence

ſence alone can conſtitute: Not for * *Adam*'s Fault imputed to me, but my own actual Diſobedience, refuſing that reaſonable Service and Homage which he expects and requires from all his rational Creatures. I had been remiſs in Acknowledgments to my great Creator, and merciful Benefactor, at whoſe bountiful Hand I had received not only a ſpiritual Bleſſing, or Gift of Grace in my Heart, but I was indebted to divine Benificence for a large Share of temporal Bleſſings; neither of which was received, or reſented, with a proper Gratitude, nor applied to the Purpoſes (I am ſince convinced and perſwaded in my Underſtanding) they were deſigned for, by the holy Diſpenſer. And 1. The Seed (or Word) ſown in my Heart by the great Husbandman, was not ſuffer'd to fructify, or bring forth Fruit, agreeable to the Praiſe and Glory of God, as the Cares of this Life, and the Deceitfulneſs of Riches, enter'd in, and choak'd the Seed, and it thereby became unfruitful: And not only the Cares and Concerns of the World, which ſometimes become accidentally unlawful, but the vain Pleaſures, irrational Recreations, trifling, unedifying and pernicious Books, with all the Train of idle Amuſements, to which the World commonly annex the ſoft and gentle Epithet of *Innocent*, ingroſs'd my precious Time; the proper Improvement of which wiſe Men, in all Ages, eſteem'd

* To refute this Doctrine, read Dr. *Whitby*'s Treatiſe on what is call'd *Original Sin*. In the Courſe of my Remarks, I chooſe to produce other Authorities than thoſe of our own Society; ſince ſuch is the unaccountable Prejudice of ſome People, that they will reject Truth and Reaſon, for no other Cauſe, but that it is offered by one call'd a *Quaker*.

eſteem'd the higheſt Point of Wiſdom, and of ſo ineſtimable a Conſideration, as occaſions a late pious Author to aſſert, that the *Man was yet unborn, who truly knew the value of an Hour.* And the Apoſtle *Paul*, in an earneſt Manner, exhorts the Believers *to redeem the Time, becauſe the Days are evil*; and again, directs the Church to *walk in Wiſdom towards them that are without, redeeming the Time.* That Time was valuable, and to be well employ'd and improv'd, I had often heard: but falſe, deluſive Pleaſure, unwilling to hear, or at leaſt to yield to the Voice of Truth, robb'd me of that Bleſſing I am now, thro' God's Aſſiſtance, endeavouring to redeem and improve, agreeable to the Apoſtle's Advice: *Paſs the Time of your ſojourning here in Fear* (and Reverence) fearing to offend the Infinite Majeſty of Heaven, who takes Cognizance of every Thought, Word, and Action. But alas! this Truth and Conſideration never ſo much as occurr'd, when I was ſpending my Days in Vanity, and my Years in unprofitable Purſuits; forgetting the holy One of *Iſrael*, Days without Number; never ſo much as remarking the royal Prophet's Aſſertion, That (not only the flagrantly wicked) but *thoſe who forget God, ſhall be turn'd into Hell.* And the Prophet *Jeremiah* tells us, *God will pour out of his Anger upon the Families that call not upon his Name*, Jer. x. 25. And God declares, that *He had ſuffered the Deſolation of his People* Iſrael, *becauſe they had forgotten him, and burnt Incenſe unto Vanity; that they had forgot him, and truſted to Falſhood;*

Falſhood; *that according to their Paſtures or Poſſeſſions, ſo were they fill'd, and their Hearts thereby exalted*; *therefore have they forgotten me, ſaith the Lord.* And the Prophet *Hoſea* complains, that *Iſrael had forgot his Maker, and builded Temples to Idols*; *that the Calf* (or Idol) *of* Samaria *had caſt them out of his Favour*; *for they had ſown Vanity and the Wind, and they ſhould reap the Whirlwind*; *that Strangers ſhould ſwallow them up, the Enemy ſhould purſue them*; *and a Fire ſhould devour their Palaces.* Theſe are ſome of the diſmal and deplorable Effects of Sin, and the terrible Penalties Sinners who forget God, and make to themſelves Idols of Vanity, are obnoxious to, in this Life; where the temporal Conſequences of Sin appear terrible and ſhocking, which one would think a ſufficient Reaſon to deter People from every Appearance of Evil; but when we reflect on this Truth, *viz.* "That without ſincere returning to God by Repentance, and Amendment of Life, and being reconcil'd to Him thro' Sanctification of our Spirits by CHRIST JESUS, the Puniſhment for our Sins will attend us to all Eternity, and will aſſuredly deprive us of that Reſt and Peace prepar'd only for the People of God:" How ſhould this Thought ſpeedily remove from every Heart, that is not quite inſenſible and obdurate, the dangerous Sin of Unbelief in the Power of God, and excite them to apply to the Father of Mercies for Remiſſion of Sin by CHRIST JESUS. But ſome may object, That tho' many, called Chriſtians live in too much Forgetful-

neſs of God, yet they cannot be chargeable with worſhipping of Idols, as the *Jews* were; ſo that the above Scripture Paſſages cannot be altogether applicable to them. I ſhall anſwer this Objection in the Words of one of the firſt Movers of the Reformation, *viz.* Dr. *John Staupitz: He that prefers any Thing that is outward and temporal before God, prefers the Creature before the Creator; and robs God of his Glory and higheſt Honour, and makes that to be his God, which is not God: For that which the Heart loves moſt, the ſame it honours as God, whatſoever the Mouth may ſay to the contrary. Who knows not, that if a Chriſtian ſhould now-a-days ſay, that his Goods, &c. were his God, he would be condemned as a Blaſphemer; and yet who is there of us, who doth not ſee, in the daily Practice and Actions of Men, that temporal Goods, Pleaſure and Honour, are preferred before God, and his Love, to that Degree, that it is Matter of Lamentation? We will by no Means endure the Reproach of being Idolaters, tho' indeed we are ſo, really and in Truth, no leſs than others were of old: At this very Day, O gracious God! many in Chriſtendom worſhip Gold, Silver, Wood, and the Goods of this World, as the Heathen did Thouſands of Years ago, notwithſtanding they ſay with their Mouths,* Our Father, which art in Heaven: *But true Adoration conſiſts in loving, not in ſpeaking. He prays well, who loves God moſt; and he who does not love God, neither does nor can pray, tho' he repeat a thouſand Pſalms or Prayers: He who loves God, ſerves him;*

him; but he who does not love him, neither doth, nor can serve him, however great Works of Devotion he may outwardly perform. But to return; In this careless and forgetful Situation, which I have mentioned, was I when the Almighty dispensed a Share of his temporal Favours to me, which I received with a stupid Indifference, and without Thanksgiving, as they were common Mercies; "And like a certain Brute Animal, who devours the Fruit which falls from a Tree, without looking up to see from whence it comes:" So I received the Blessings of Providence no otherwise, but as Things of Chance, or of Course, or the Effect of Care and Industry; not considering whose Hand was necessary to render our Endeavours successful and prosperous; nor that the same Power that bestows and dispenses Blessings and Mercies, can in a Moment remand and call them back, and deprive us of them, whenever he pleases; and that for every Morsel we eat, we are indebted to God's Bounty and Goodness, and not to our own Wisdom or Prudence: In a Word, that in Him we live, move, and have our Being. But how insensible was I of these Truths, when, in Effect, I lived as if I had been an unaccountable and independent Being, and vainly thought my Mountain was made so strong, that it would never be removed. I was rich and full, and needed nothing, when alas! I was poor and miserable, blind and naked, and wanted all Things, when destitute of the Favour of God, and without witnessing the Smiles of his Countenance. Thus, as the Psalmist

confeſſes himſelf once, ſo fooliſh and ignorant was I, ſaying, in Effect, to God, "Depart from me, for I deſire not the Knowledge of thy Ways; what is the Almighty that I ſhould deſire him? Or what greater Profit would accrue, if we pray'd unto Him, or ſerved Him?" By this falſe Reaſoning is the Candle of the Ungodly extinguiſhed; from whence proceeds Deſtruction upon the Inconſiderate and Unrighteous, unleſs they return, repent and amend. But now behold the Goodneſs, Lenity and Long-ſuffering, of a merciful God! who had been long alluring me by his Mercies, which I paſſed light by, or rejected; he has now Recourſe to his Judgments; but neither did I yet ſee that Afflictions aroſe not out of the Duſt, but that Mankind were naturally and promiſcuouſly born to Trouble. I was indeed afflicted, and I mourn'd; but it was for the Abſence of temporal Bleſſings; and as my Deſires and Purſuits extended no higher, I endeavoured to ſupport my Diſtreſs, by gratifying my Pride and Ambition to the Extent of my Power. At length, in this Day of Adverſity, I began a little to conſider, and applied to God, in Prayer and Supplication, that he would be pleaſed to deliver me out of my Diſtreſs, or ſupport me under it; ſtill ignorant of the Joys of his Salvation, or that there was ſpiritual Conſolation in ſtore for me on certain Conditions, if I rightly applied for them; but being inſenſible of the Want of them, I as yet asked them not, till the happy Seaſon of my Life, wherein I witneſſed a religious Turn of Mind, and the draw-

drawing Cords of God's Love inclining my Heart to seek his Face and Favour, with greater Ardency and Fervour than I had ever been sensible of before: I now began to view and consider Things in another Light than I formerly had done; and, by reversing the Perspective, the fading Objects and Enjoyments of this Life lessen'd in my View and Account; and as the Love of God and of heavenly Things increased in my Heart, so in Proportion my Fondness for worldly Enjoyments decreased and vanished. At length the warmest Returns of Love and Gratitude began to arise in my Soul to God, who first loved me, and had done great Things for me, by plucking my Feet out of the Mire and Clay of Sin and Folly, and fixing them upon the Rock CHRIST JESUS. He also put a new Song in my Mouth, which none but those who are in Degree redeem'd by his precious Blood can sing, even Praises to our God! Thus on my turning to God, I began to witness new Thoughts, new Desires, new Affections, new Hopes, new Joys, and new Fears; and to see the Necessity of Regeneration and a new Birth unto Righteousness, without which I could not possibly enter the Kingdom of God; that all Things must be changed, and become new, all of, and pointing to God. And farther, if I would be CHRIST's Disciple, I must deny myself, take up a Cross to my own Will, be subject to, and follow him, under whose Banner I had now listed; thus examining and pursuing this Doctrine and Precept of our Lord's, I was naturally led, in some Degree, to what is called

led *Quakeriſm* (tho' it appear'd to me in no other Form nor Name, than that of primitive Chriſtianity) which, in my firſt Thoughts of Religion, I had no more Intention of embracing than I had of receiving *Mahometiſm*; knowing little more of the *Quakers*, than that They were a plain People in their Garb and Speech. But it has been remarked to me, that my Mother was ſome Time of this Perſuaſion, and no Wonder that I ſhould have a warm Side for her Opinion. I anſwer'd, My Father was a Member of the Church of *England*, and educated me in that Way; and I well remember, I had a much warmer Side for his Opinion; not that I knew what was the eſſential Difference in their religious Sentiments, or at leaſt that affected me, any farther than that one allow'd me ſomething more Liberty in Dreſs; whereas the other would tell me Plainneſs in Apparel was moſt agreeable to Chriſtianity, and to the Divine Being, who hated Pride in his Creatures. To be ſure I thought this Doctrine abſurd, by the Reflection I remember I made at the Time, *That God, I believed, would not reject me, on the Score of wearing Lace, or a fine and gay Silk Gown.* I have thought ſince, any one might imagine I had fetch'd my Argument from *Lucretian* Principles, that the Almighty could not deſcend ſo low as to notice ſuch Trifles, or mark little Follies, if Gaiety in Apparel ſhould be One; but no Wonder that when I was a Child, I ſhould reaſon as a Child. I am ſenſible that Silks, Ribbons and Lace, are not any where in Scripture directly forbidden; but I

learn

learn from thence, that Pride, and all Manner of Superfluity, is. And if, by wearing this rich Silk, or adorning ourſelves with the other ſuperfluous Ornaments, we feed and nouriſh a proud, vain Deſire, it becomes by this Circumſtance as unlawful as Pride itſelf; and that they do ſo, I have greatly experienced: *For tho' Religion ſtands not ſimply in Clothes, yet true Religion ſtands in that which ſets Bounds and Limits to the Mind with reſpect to Clothes, as well as other Things.* And to ſtrengthen this Aſſertion, or rather to prove it, I ſhall offer an Inſtance of my own Experience, *viz. When it pleaſed the Lord to viſit my Soul, and to appear to me in his Glory, the View of which diſcover'd to me my own Unworthineſs, and cauſed me not only to deſpiſe and abhor myſelf, but my ſplendid Apparel alſo: I had now no Delight in Dreſs and Ornament, nor other Things I had uſually taken much Pleaſure in: True Chriſtianity, which I began to be acquainted with, ſet a Bound to my Deſires, and directed me to Plainneſs, before I had any Intention of joining the Society of the People called* Quakers; *and indeed all earthly and tranſitory Objects were, and are, in my View and Eſtimation, as Loſs, Droſs and Dung, in Compariſon of the Excellency, Glory and Beauty, I behold in God, and find in the Enjoyment of his Divine Favour; and at times I am ready to cry out,* O! how great is his Glory, and tranſcendently great his Beauty!

But to return: When I was (by Marriage) remov'd from my Mother's Care and Direction, I continued in my Father's Profeſſion of Religion, for no other Reaſon that I remember, but that

that it allow'd me moſt Liberty in Dreſs and Recreations, tho' my Father, as well as my Mother, did not fail to inculcate a juſt Abhorrence of the Evils the moral Law condemns. However, when I conſider'd and examined religious Matters with more Seriouſneſs, Sincerity and Attention, than was uſual with me, I found the little Religion (or rather the Profeſſion of it) that I had, was that of my Education, which I could not properly call my own, as it was not the Religion of my Judgment, which I find abſolutely neceſſary, and highly reaſonable to be concerned for. I read the Scriptures with ſome Attention; and I have conſider'd the following Text, that *unleſs we deny ourſelves, and take up a daily Croſs, we cannot be CHRIST's Diſciples.* This Paſſage appear'd to me to contain ſome other and further Conſtruction and Deſign than many People allow, who confine it to moral Precepts and Duties. But before I proceed to ſay in what Senſe others, as well as myſelf, underſtand this Chriſtian Doctrine, I think it may not be impertinent briefly to give ſome Reaſon of my Faith and Hope, which I deſire to do in the ſame Diſpoſition the Apoſtle recommends, *viz. In Meekneſs and Fear.* And firſt, upon examining the Creed call'd *The Apoſtles*, I could ſubſcribe to every Article therein contain'd, except one, *(Chriſt deſcended into Hell)* which, if it be meant no other than the Grave, I ſubſcribe to that alſo. Next, I have conſidered and examined *The Articles of the Church of England* (of which I had profeſſed myſelf a Member ſome Years, without ſo much

as

as knowing what Doctrines or Principles they profeſſed and held; this, I may venture to ſay, without Breach of Charity, is the Caſe of many Profeſſors at this Day) But upon peruſing the above Articles (as well as conſidering the Opinion of moſt diſſenting Sects) I could not reconcile ſome Opinions therein contained with Scripture Doctrine and Teſtimonies; particularly a Paragraph in the fifteenth Article, where it is ſaid, "Tho' we are all baptized and born again in CHRIST, yet we offend in many Things." This Opinion appears to me manifeſtly repugnant to Scripture Accounts of many, who attain'd in this Life a perfect Freedom from Sin. And the Text farther quoted by that Church will not import the Apoſtle himſelf to be included in it, 1 *John* i. 8. And I am of Opinion, we may ſafely interpret the Paſſage by ſome other Scripture Text; wherein the Apoſtles include themſelves with Sinners, yet by no Means can be underſtood, that they themſelves were in the like Circumſtances. And now I ſhall offer the following Scripture Teſtimonies, which appear to corroborate, and greatly to juſtify us, with regard to a Tenet we particularly hold, *viz. The Poſſibility* (God's Grace aſſiſting) *of obtaining a perfect Freedom** from

* This Doctrine being deny'd by moſt Chriſtians except the *Quakers*, I thought proper to tranſcribe Part of a Converſation on that Subject, between a *Clergyman* and a *Quaker*-------

Qua. Doſt thou own a Purgatory?

Cler. No.

Qua. When then muſt we be freed from Sin, and made fit for Heaven?

Cler. I believe God Almighty is able to forgive his People their Sins, and to fit them for Heaven, a little before they depart.

Qua. How long?

Cler. It may be an Hour or two.

from Sin even in this Life. Noah *was a just Man, and perfect in his Generation.* Job *was a perfect Man, and one that fear'd God, and eſchew'd Evil. God made* David's *Way perfect. Bleſſed are the Undefiled in the Way, who walk in the Law of the Lord. Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. Every one that is perfect ſhall be as his Maſter. We ſpeak Wiſdom among them that are perfect. This alſo we wiſh, even your Perfection. Finally, Brethren, be perfect. That the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed to every good Word and Work. But the God of all Grace make you perfect. That you may be perfect and intire, wanting nothing. Therefore leaving the Doctrines of the Principles of CHRIST, let us go on to Perfection.* Zachariah *and* Elizabeth *were both holy, walking in all the Commandments of the Lord blameleſs. The Apoſtle* Paul *kept a Conſcience void of Offence, both in the Sight of God and Man. If we ſay we have Fellowſhip with God, and walk in Darkneſs, we lie, and do not the Truth. Every Man that hath Hope in CHRIST purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure. Whoſoever committeth Sin tranſgreſſeth the Law, for Sin is the Tranſgreſſion of the Law. Whoſoever abideth in him ſinneth not; for you know that CHRIST was manifeſted to take away our Sins. Whoſoever ſinneth hath not ſeen him, neither known him. Little Children, let no Man deceive you. He that doeth Righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous; and he that committeth Sin is of*

Cun. I believe a Day or two, as well as an Hour or two.
Cler. I believe ſo too.----
The *Quaker* carried gradually to a Month or two, till he brought it to ſeven Years; to which his Opponent anſwer'd, He believed the ſame.

of the Devil. For this Purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. Whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked One toucheth him not, 1 John v. 18. *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a Liar, and his Word is not in us*; but *if we confess and forsake our Sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness, which is Sin.* And further, I observe, that both the Old and New-Testament abound with Exhortations to a Life of Holiness and Purity. *Let us cleanse ourselves*, says the Apostle *Paul, from the Pollution of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.* And I have never remarked any Text yet, that leaves me the least Room to think, that a partial Holiness will render us acceptable to God. And upon reading a certain Annotator* on the Subject, tho' he denies the Doctrine, yet is obliged to own this much, *That to require perfect Obedience to his Laws, is a Thing absolutely necessary on God's Part, from the Perfection of his Divine Nature, and his Relation to us as a Governor; to require that we should not sin; that is*, says he, *transgress any of God's Laws: For Sin being the Transgression of the Law, and perfect and unsinning Obedience being one and the same, if God requires under the new Covenant that I should not transgress any of his Laws, as he most certainly must do, he must require me not to sin against them; and so he must require perfect and unsinning Obedience.* Another Clergyman,

* Doctor Whitby.

gyman, discourſing on the Subject of Holineſs, has theſe Words: *The Divine Being is tranſcendently holy, and infinitely perfect; he is the Fountain of all Holineſs, and ſanctifies his Saints, his People, and his Miniſters; he requires perfect Holineſs in thoſe who approach him, and to be honour'd by his Servants.* And he further ſays, *That true Holineſs conſiſts in a Conformity to the Nature and Will of God; whereby a Saint is diſtinguiſhed from the unrenew'd World, and is not acted by their Principles, nor govern'd by their Maxims and Cuſtoms.* But farther, upon peruſing the Scripture, I have found no Room for Ceremonies under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, nor Precedent for Muſick in the Chriſtian Church. The Liturgy, or Form of Prayer, became quite uſeleſs to me, and ſinging *David*'s Pſalms burthenſome; I conſider'd, and it appear'd to me, we were endeavouring rather to pleaſe and gratify our own Ear, than ſinging to the Praiſe and Glory of God, and I find that *David*'s Pſalms can no more be ſuitable to the State of the Souls of a whole or numerous Congregation, than the ſame Form of Prayer can be agreeable to all Conditions and ſpiritual Caſes. I ſhall, among many, give a few Inſtances of the Inconſiſtency and Unſuitableneſs of the Pſalms of *David*, to the Conditions of Men of the following Characters, who, when they are in the Aſſemblies where theſe Pſalms are ſung occaſionally, they cuſtomarily join in this Part of the Worſhip. The Wanton, who ſpends his precious Time in Jollity, he ſings, *I am weary with my Groaning, I make my Couch to ſwim with*

with my Tears. The proud Atheiſt, who hath baniſhed God out of all his Thoughts, he ſings, *I have ſet the Lord always before me*, &c. The vain Man, who delights in the Company and Society of wicked Perſons, he ſings, *I have hated the Congregations of Evil-doers.* The wither'd Tree, dead to God, and conſequently fruitleſs, he ſings, *I am like a green Olive-tree in the Houſe of God.* He whoſe Heart is a Cage of Uncleanneſs, ſings, *My Heart is inditing a good Matter.* The daily Feaſter, whoſe Legs can ſcarce bear about his corpulent Body, he ſings, *My Knees are weak thro' Faſting, and my Fleſh faileth of Fatneſs.* Satan's Captive, who wallows in the Mire and Filth of Sin, he ſings, *O Lord, truly I am thy Servant.* The lawleſs Man, whoſe Life is a Life of Rebellion, ſubject to Sin and Satan, he ſings, *The Law of thy Mouth is dearer unto me than Thouſands of Gold and Silver.* The proud and ambitious Perſon ſings, *Lord, my Heart is not haughty, nor mine Eyes lofty; my Soul is even as a weaned Child*, &c. It has been objected, that we may as reaſonably ſing *David's* Pſalms, as read them; but I apprehend an eſſential Difference between reading them as *David's* Experience, or Words he uſed in praiſing God (which were no Doubt ſuggeſted by the Holy Spirit) and reducing them to our own Acts of Worſhip; unleſs the Words be ſuitable to the State of our Souls, and brought to our Remembrance by the ſame Divine Influence which preſented them to the Mind of *David*, according as they ſuited the Circumſtance of his Soul, or were ſuitable or

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applicable to the Condition of others, to whom he ſometimes ſpeaks, in a feeling Senſe, of the different States of the Godly and the Wicked. I have alſo conſider'd it irrational to limit and preſcribe to a Chriſtian, even the weakeſt, a ſet Form of Prayer, ſince the Apoſtle *Paul* expreſly declar'd, *We know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itſelf maketh Interceſſion for us with Groanings, which cannot be utter'd*, Rom viii. 26.

I remember, when I experienced the Work of God's Grace operating on my Soul, and diſcovering to me my State and Condition, the common Prayer became of no Service to me, as I found it highly neceſſary that my Heart ſhould be prepared by the Lord to enable me to addreſs him by his own Spirit; and when he is pleaſed to touch and incline the Heart to himſelf, behold (as it is ſaid on a memorable Occaſion) *we pray*; We are immediately taught to pray in Terms ſuggeſted by the Holy Spirit, who beſt knows our Neceſſities, helps our Infirmities, and cauſes us ſuitably to approach the Throne of Grace, and to requeſt and pray with the Spirit, and with the Underſtanding. And as we are not to pray in our own Words, neither can we pray acceptably in our own Time; as I have witneſſed on a very particular Occaſion, when I profeſſed myſelf a Member of the Church of *England*. Being return'd from a Voyage, I, according to Cuſtom, ſent Notice, that I ſhould publickly give God Thanks for my Preſervation at Sea; thus when the ſtated Prayer of Thankſgiving was read, I was indeed

deed on my Knees, but my Heart was not properly warm'd, nor influenc'd to addreſs the Almighty, at the Time the Congregation was told, I was giving God humble and hearty Thanks for ſuch a Mercy; I repeated the Form indeed, but it was only with my Lips, my Heart had little Share in this formal Devotion; and reflecting, while on my Knees, that I was wrong, conſequently the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving I had offer'd in ſo unacceptable a Manner, muſt be an Offence to God. The above Reflection, I am not aſham'd to ſay, cauſed me to tremble at the very Inſtant. Thus I find, that waiting to be ſuitably influenced by the Spirit, ought to be previous to this ſolemn Act of Worſhip. But farther, as I have above noted, I find no Place in the Church of CHRIST for Ceremonies, as they appear to be a very great Obſtacle in the Way of ſpiritual Worſhip; *for bodily Exerciſe profiteth little*; 'tis the Spirit of CHRIST muſt quicken us for ſpiritual Worſhip. And tho' God wink'd at Times of Ignorance and Blindneſs, when Men vainly imagin'd that Worſhip was moſt acceptably perform'd to him at this Place, or the other Mountain; in this, or the other Ceremony; yet CHRIST the Light, who came, and is come to diſpel all the dark Clouds of Ignorance and Error, and to direct Men to himſelf the Way, the Light, and the Truth, on a remarkable Occaſion explodes Mens Opinions in this important Matter, by ſaying, that it *was neither at* Jeruſalem, *nor yet at the Mountain* (of Samaria) *the Father was to be worſhipped*; *but the Hour com-*

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eth, and now is, when the true Worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth: For the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him. God is a Spirit, and thoſe who worſhip him (acceptably) *muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth*, not in Formality and Ceremonies. The Author of the Preface to the Common Prayer tells us, *The Ceremonies retain'd in the Church* (of England) *were deviſed and inſtituted by Man, and ſome that are thrown out, enter'd at firſt with a Zeal without Knowledge, and grew daily to more and more Abuſes; which not only for Unprofitableneſs, but becauſe they have much blinded the People, and obſcured the Glory of God, are rejected. Others*, ſays he, *tho' deviſed by Man, are retain'd for Order and Edification:* And at the ſame Time tells us, that CHRIST's *Goſpel is not a ceremonial Law; but it is a Religion to ſerve God, not in the Bondage of the Figure and Shadow, but in the Freedom of the Spirit.* To this laſt Propoſition I heartily agree; then why ſhould we return to the weak and beggarly Elements, or deſire again to be in Bondage? *You obſerve*, (ſays the Apoſtle *Paul*) *Days and Months, and Times and Years; I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you Labour in vain: But as ye have received* CHRIST JESUS *the Lord, ſo walk in him, aad beware leaſt any Man ſpoil you thro' Philoſophy, and vain Deceit, after the Traditions of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after CHRIST. Why, as tho' living in the World, are ye Subjects to Ordinances? Touch not, taſte not, handle not, which all are to periſh with the uſing, after the Commandments and Doctrines*

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of Men. But I shall no longer insist on these Matters of Disputation; neither do I propose to give an Account of the Tenets or Principles professed by us as a Society, that being already done in a very ample Manner by our Friend *Robert Barclay.* I have only tho't proper to mention several Obstacles which lay in my Way when I began to search for Truth: For as my Business is not Controversy, but Love, Good-will and Charity, to all Mankind, I purpose to give you a short Account of the great Disadvantages I labour'd under in a State of Forgetfulness of God; and the inexpressible Benefits I have witnessed from a Return to, and Attention upon God, and Submission, Resignation, and Subjection to his blessed Will and Commands. And as far as my Testimony to the Power and Efficacy of the Grace of God, and the Doctrine and Necessity of bearing the Cross, will go, to invite, persuade and beseech you to draw nigh, and acquaint yourselves with God, thro' JESUS CHRIST our Lord, who hath said, and now says, *Look unto me all ye Ends of the Earth, and be ye saved.* In vain is Salvation look'd for from the Hills or Mountains, or from our own exalted Imaginations, or high Pretensions to Religion. And I have this Testimony to bear to God's Power, that I witnessed Salvation from Sin only and alone, from the Omnipotent Hand of the Lord, giving me Victory over my vain Thoughts, Affections and Desires, and bringing them under the Power of the Cross of CHRIST, by which I am crucified unto the World, and the World unto me. There-

fore if you would enter into his Reſt, harden not your Hearts againſt the Call and Invitation our compaſſionate Lord continues to give *all (returning)* Sinners; *Come unto me*, (ſays Chriſt) *all ye that are weary, and heavy laden*, with the Burden of your Sins, be willing to part with them, and he will give you Reſt. Let not, I beſeech you, the Sin of Unbelief, in the Power of CHRIST, enter your Hearts: *For if ye believe not* (ſays Chriſt) *that I am He*, (viz. *the Saviour of the World, who is come to ſave you from your Sins*) *and continue in your Sins, you ſhall die in them; and then whither I go you cannot come.* Fly then for your Lives, I beſeech you; fly from the Wrath to come; apply to CHRIST for eternal Life, and he will inform you what you muſt do to be ſaved; his Power is eternally and unchangeably the ſame; his Hand is not ſhorten'd, that it cannot ſave, neither is his Ear heavy, that it cannot hear; therefore give not Sleep to your Eyes, till your witneſs God in CHRIST reconciling you to himſelf. The Time preſent, we all know, is only ours; then, while 'tis called to Day, let us hear his Voice, who ſpeaks as never Man ſpoke, even with Power and Authority, ſaying, *Riſe up you that are at Eaſe in your Sins; tremble ye careleſs Ones; caſt your Idols from you, and look unto the Rock and holy One of* Iſrael; *ſeek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the Wicked forſake his Ways, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and turn unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon.*

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I would now obſerve to you who indulge yourſelves in the falſe Pleaſures, vain Amuſements and Recreations, of the Age, which once I had a Fondneſs for, as well as you now have; that when the Almighty was pleaſed in his Mercy to open the Eyes of my Underſtanding, I plainly perceived by that Light (he had placed in my Conſcience, which enabled me to diſcern between Right and Wrong, the Precious and the Vile) that a Life of Pleaſure and Diverſion was inconſiſtent with the Life of a Chriſtian: I found, that to be thus carnally minded, has been Death to my Soul; but as I gradually witneſſed CHRIST, and the Power of his Reſurrection raiſing me from the Death of theſe Sins, I felt a Neceſſity of parting with, and denying myſelf of them; and I conſider'd them to be of the greateſt Obſtacles in a religious Progreſs. But it has been objected, that Recreations are abſolutely neceſſary to unbend and relax the Mind, when it has been occupy'd or employ'd in worldly Affairs, or in the more ſerious Attention on divine Objects, to which it is not poſſible it can be attending always. I grant, that our Lord's enjoining his Followers, to *watch and pray continually*, and *Paul*'s exhorting the *Theſſalonians*, to *pray without ceaſing*, does not, in a ſtrict and literal Senſe, oblige us to be always on our Knees, nor occupy'd in mental Prayer; for tho' we ought to be led and guided by the Spirit of CHRIST in all our Actions, or, at leaſt, that all we do by Permiſſion, as well as by immediate Direction, may be approved in his

Sight; yet we are not at all Times under an Influence neceſſary for addreſſing the Throne of Grace, in the ſolemn Act of Prayer: *Nevertheleſs, we ſhould always be ſo far in a Spirit of Prayer and Watchfulneſs, as we ought to be always in a Chriſtian and virtuous Temper of Mind*; which is indeed truly and effectually worſhipping the Divine Being, when we do not confine our Service to ſet Days, or appointed Hours of Devotion, but to a conſtant, ſteady and uniform Life of Virtue, Piety and Holineſs. Some are apt to think all is well, and they have done their Duty to God, when they neglect not cuſtomary times of formal Prayer, or Devotion (as it is falſely called) or their Diverſions don't interfere with this Formality, which by ſome is punctually perform'd. This brings to my Remembrance the abſurd as well as impious Character a certain Author gives of a Woman of this prepoſterous Compoſition of Diverſion and Devotion, or, in his own Words, of Religion and Cards; he repreſents her, in ſome Interval of her Game, juſt recollecting it was her Hour of Devotion or Prayer, upon which ſhe riſes in great Precipitation, and deſires her Neighbour to hold her Cards till ſhe ſteps and ſays her Prayers. To mention this Character, is ſufficient to ſhew the Abſurdity of it. Again, the Deſcription another Writer gives of a Woman at her Gaming-Table, is enough, one would imagine, to make the hardeſt Forehead bluſh: And to ſay no more, than that it renders her unaimable in the Eyes of reaſonable People, one would judge, this would

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be a great Reaſon for her to decline the Diverſion; but when ſhe is repreſented accuſing her ill Fortune, as ſhe calls it, in Terms of Fury and Abſurdity, the Portrait is horrid and ſhocking, unbecoming a rational Mind, and moſt unworthy any Perſon who profeſſes Chriſtianity. Compare this Character with humble *Mary*'s ſitting at her Lord's Feet, waiting to hear the gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth----compare it with the Apoſtle's Deſcription of a Woman profeſſing Godlineſs, whoſe Mind is adorn'd with *Meekneſs*, *Quietneſs and Modeſty*; and ſee if you can diſcover one ſimilar Line in the Characters. Again, deſcribe a Woman dancing at a Ball, and adorn'd with all the Luxury and Pomp of Dreſs, tending, according to the Opinion of a pious Writer, to excite a Paſſion I forbear to name; and Country Dances, ſome of 'em, you know, are condemn'd by a Writer much admir'd by the polite and faſhionable Part of the World, who peruſe him, I have thought, to very little Purpoſe: Examine, I ſay, the Characters I have mentioned, and ſee if you can obſerve the leaſt Trace of Chriſtianity in them: In ſhort, a dancing, gaming, maſquerading Chriſtian, appears as great a Contradiction, and ſounds as harſh and uncouth in one's Ears, as a polluted Chriſtian; which I have heard a learn'd Perſon ſay, was no Inconſiſtency; however, he fail'd in his Proof, ſince I can as ſoon reconcile Light and Darkneſs, CHRIST and Belial, as that a Perſon can be both a Sinner and a Saint, at the ſame Moment of Time. But, further, tho' ſome Recreations,

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properly chosen and adapted, may be lawful to a Christian; yet I have found those the Generality of People allow themselves in, are pernicious and hurtful in their Consequences, and therefore unlawful to, and inconsistent with the Life of a Christian. Upon perusing the Scripture, I find the Apostle *Paul* exhorting the *Corinthians* in these Words, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God:* From whence I also learn, that I ought not to do any Thing that would obstruct or hinder, or may be in Opposition to God's Honour. And tho' I don't find any direct Prohibition of Cards, Plays, Balls, Assemblies, Masquerades, Musick-gardens, &c. yet I observe they are indirectly forbid, as they have not the least Tendency to promote God's Glory; but, on the contrary, if you'll take my own Experience for Evidence, tend to hinder and prevent any Taste or Relish for divine or spiritual Enjoyments; the Soul given up to sensual Pleasure, lies sordidly groveling on Earth, when 'tis design'd to contemplate and enjoy more rational, as well as sublime and heavenly Delights. We are told by an Author (pretty generally read) who discoursing, in some of his Writings, on the Design of the Almighty in placing Mortals here on Earth, *We were*, says he, *left here for a Time, to be educated for Heaven.* But when we look about, and observe what Methods for this Education are pursued, we can't well help concluding, the Generality of People have very unnatural, inadequate and gross Ideas, of that glorious Kingdom;

dom; and that, if they reflect at all, they must consider it no other than a *Mahometan* Paradise; as the Plan of Education now-a-days, seems design'd and calculated, to qualify for a Place where the Senses are only to be gratified and entertained: And indeed I am induced to think the Apostle's Doctrine quite revers'd by those called Christians, who, many of them, appear to live by Sight, and not by Faith. That Christians ought not to indulge themselves in the usual Pleasures, Diversions, and vain Customs, of the World, seems evident from the sacred Writings; as these Amusements appear to be diametrically opposite to the Spirit, Temper and Rules of Christianity; that System being absolutely of another Nature and Tendency, calculated to subdue and regulate the Passions and Affections of the Mind, by calling us to a Life of Self-denial, and instructing us to walk in the Steps of an humble, lowly and crucified, Saviour; for whoever will be CHRIST's Disciple, must *crucify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*; and I think the following Passages of Scripture greatly evince, that a Life of Pleasure is inconsistent with the Life of Christianity; the Apostle *Paul* tells us, that *those who live in Pleasure, are dead while they live:* Dead to God and spiritual Enjoyments. Christians are by the same Apostle exhorted to *redeem the Time, because the Days are Evil*; which I cannot reconcile to the fashionable Phrase used by professed Christians; *How shall we kill Time? Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, is a Precept incompatible to spending

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the greateſt Part of our precious Time in Mirth, Wantonneſs, Gaming, Dancing, &c. *Be ſober, be vigilant, becauſe your Adverſary, the Devil, is walking about like a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour; whom reſiſt, ſtedfaſt in the Faith:* I have conſider'd this Paſſage alſo, and find it contrary to the Practice of modern Chriſtians; who, inſtead of reſiſting the Temptations of Satan, blindly ſeek and run into them, by their frequent Attendance on prophane and wanton Plays, vain Muſick-gardens, and wicked Maſquerades, Opera's, &c. The Reaſon why Chriſtians are to be found in a watchful Poſture, is here given; *Becauſe our Adverſary the Devil, is ſeeking whom he may devour*; we are exhorted to take Heed how we ſtand, leſt we fall; to *watch and pray, leſt* we *enter into Temptation*; therefore a Life of Wantonneſs and Riot, Eaſe and Security, cannot be agreeable to that Circumſpection and Diligence requiſite in every Chriſtian, in order to *make his Calling and Election ſure.* And I have tho't a Life of Diverſion and Pleaſure, is very unſuitable to Sinners, who may be guilty of immoral Acts, and, perhaps, have lived long in open Violation of God's Laws: Surely it is high Time for ſuch as theſe to awake out of Sleep, out of the Lethargy and Death of Sin; for the Lord, by the Mouth of his Prophet, pronounces a Woe againſt ſuch as are at Eaſe in their Sins; and calls upon them to reform, in theſe Words; *Cleanſe your Hands, ye Sinners, and purify your Hearts, ye double-minded, be afflicted for your Sin, mourn and weep: Go to,*

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you rich Men, weep and howl for your Miseries that shall come upon you; for you have lived in Pleasure on the Earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your Hearts as in a Day of Slaughter, &c. And our Lord pronounces a Woe against them that *laugh now, for they shall weep and mourn; but blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall rejoice hereafter. Weep for yourselves, and for your Children*, was the Advice of CHRIST to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*; and very necessary for us at this Day, that our Mirth should be turned into Mourning, and the evil Rejoicing of many into Heaviness. These, and such like Sentences of the sacred Records, appear to me to be irreconcilable with the common Study and Practice of leaving Tokens of Mirth, Luxury and Wantonness, in every Place, saying, *To morrow shall be as this Day, and much more abundant*; whereas we know not what shall be on the Morrow: For what is your Life! It is even as a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanishes away. *The Wicked*, says holy *Job*, *spend their Days in Mirth, and, in a Moment, go down to the Grave.* But some object, that *Solomon* seems to allow us Times and Seasons for Recreations and Divertisements, you consider as unlawful Pleasures, *viz. A Time to sing, and a Time to dance*, &c. Oh! what is called an Allowance, appears to me to amount to no more, than that in *Solomon's* Days, as well as in all former Ages of the World, there was Times in which People did those Things he enumerates, and which he observes, only adds Vanity to all human

Actions and Inventions; but he does not determine whether they were lawful or otherwise: He tells us also, of a Time to laugh, or rejoice; our Lord, as above, pronounces a Woe against those that laugh now [*or in this Gospel-Day, wherein you are called to Repentance, to fit and qualify you to receive the Gospel of Christ and his Kingdom*] for they shall mourn and weep. *Solomon* mentions a Time to hate; which under the Gospel is positively prohibited, or forbid, by CHRIST's own Remarks on the *Jewish* Law or Tradition; where he evidently shews, that there is no such Passion of the Mind to be exercised by Christians (except against Sin, as the Godly hate Sin, because it is a Breach of God's Law) no, not against our Enemies; his Gospel being universal Love and Beneficence to all Mankind. But granting that *Solomon* indulged himself in the Pleasures and Vanities of the Age he lived in, which indeed, appears to be his Case; yet hear how he estimates them, in what is commonly called his Recantion; having first proved worldly Wisdom, he perceived that this was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit; *For in much Wisdom is much Grief, and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow*, Eccl. i. 18. Then says he, *I commended Mirth, because a Man hath nothing better under the Sun, than to eat, drink, and be merry--- -Go to, I will prove thee with Mirth, therefore enjoy Pleasure; but, behold, this is also Vanity; I said of Laughter, it is Madness, and of Mirth, what doth it?* Eccl. ii. 1, 2. *For even in Laughter the Heart is sorrowful, and the End of that Mirth is Heaviness*, Prov. xiv.

13.

13. And we have this wise Man's Opinion, 'That it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting; and that Sorrow is better than Laughter;' for *by the Sadness of the Countenance, the Heart is made better: The Heart of the Wise, is in the House of Mourning; but the Heart of Fools, in the House of Mirth:* Thus, thou may rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart chear thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes; but *remember* it is at thy *Peril*; for know thou, that for all these Things God will bring thee into Judgment.' Let us now hear his Conclusion of the whole Matter; *The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom, and to depart from Evil a good Understanding; therefore fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man: For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be Evil.* But further, to evince that the common Diversions and Amusements of the Age, are incongruous and unfit for Christians to recreate themselves with ----do but propose to a pious, grave Clergyman, to accompany any one of you to a Ball, a Play, a Masquerade, or Assembly; or invite him to make a Party at Cards, Dice, or any Game; and see what an Indignity he'll tell thee thou hast offered him, telling thee, that these Amusements are inconsistent with his Function, &c. And indeed every one who has, or does frequent Play-houses, knows that those Clergymen who take the undue Liberty of frequent-

ing them, go conceal'd and disguis'd in what they call a Lay-habit: Whereas, if these Entertainments were suitable to a Christian Spirit, and that solid, grave, pious Disposition of Mind, which it is the Duty of every common Christian to labour for, and be found in; why may not the best Christians frequent them openly, as well as those who pretend to a lesser Degree of Piety and Holiness? I am not acquainted with any Text in the sacred Writings, that allows me, or any one else, to be one Whit less pious, holy, or virtuous, than our Teachers; nay, *David* did not scruple to say, 'In Matters of Religion, or the Things of God, that he was wiser, and had more Understanding than all his Teachers;' *For thy Testimonies, O Lord, are my Meditation and Delight; I understand more than the Antients* (who undoubtedly were well acquainted with the outward and written Law) for this cogent Reason, *because I keep thy Precepts.* And *Paul* exhorts the *Philippians* in these Words, *Brethren, be ye followers of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an Example; and whereunto we have already attain'd, let us walk by the same Rule, and mind the same Things.* And in his Directions or Council to *Timothy*, tells him, *To be an Example to the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity* [or Love] *in Spirit, in Faith, and in Purity.* He also directs *Titus*, 'To exhort the young Men to be sober-minded; in all Things shewing himself a Pattern of good Works, in Uncorruptness, Gravity, and Sincerity.'

But

But it may be objected, that ſome of the Remarks on the faſhionable Diverſions of the World, don't immediately affect you, as you have no Maſquerades nor Muſick-gardens, to entertain you; neither are Theatrical Entertainments frequent amongſt you. This is true; but you have, in the Winter-ſeaſon, Aſſemblies once a Week, wherein you dance and game; Balls and Dancing at other Times and Places, Card-playing at your own Houſes, &c. And, ſuffer me farther to ſay, That I am ſenſible you, many of you, fail not to give your Attendance on every Occaſion of Mirth and Jolity; and that you mimick *Great Britain* in every Foppery, Luxury and Recreation, within your Reach; which diſcovers an equal Inclination, but leſs Power of gratifying a Fondneſs for Pleaſure and Diverſions: And tho' you may have few or no Opportunities of frequenting Plays, your Cloſets, doubtleſs, are furniſh'd with Books of this Sort; which, if it be unlawful to ſee them exhibited on the Stage (as *William Law*, a Clergyman, greatly proves it is) 'tis equally unlawful and unfit for Chriſtians to read them: And, permit me to remind you, that you have Biſhop *Burnet*'s, as well as Biſhop *Tillotſon*'s Teſtimonies againſt Plays; who, in a Sermon on the Education of Youth, in ſo many Words, calls *the Play-houſe*, *the Devil's Chapel*: And in a Diſcourſe againſt corrupt Communication, he occaſionally mentions Plays, and ſays, 'They are intolerable, and not fit to be 'permitted in a civilized, much leſs a Chriſtian 'Nation: They do moſt notoriouſly miniſter

'to

'to Vice and Infidelity: By their Prophaneneſs they are apt to inſtil bad Principles into 'the Minds of Men, and to leſſen that Awe 'and Reverence which all Men ought to have 'of God and Religion: And by their Lewdneſs they teach Vice, and are apt to infect 'the Minds of Men, and diſpoſe them to lewd 'and diſſolute Practices:' Thus far Biſhop *Tillotſon*. Now hear the Archbiſhop of *Cambray*'s Sentiments of theſe Kind of Books and Entertainments: In his Treatiſe on the Education of Youth he tells us; 'Young Perſons, and eſpecially Women, have roving Imaginations, and 'for want of ſolid Nouriſhment, their Curioſity turns on vain and dangerous Objects; they 'are extremely affected with Romances, and 'chimerical Adventures, and Plays, in which 'prophane Love bears a mighty Share, and fills 'their Minds with empty Notions, which bear 'no Proportion to the true Motive or Spring 'of our Actions in this preſent World: A poor 'Girl, whoſe Head is fill'd with ſurprizing 'Strains, is diſappointed not to find, in the 'World, real Perſons of the Character of Romantick Heroes; and as ſhe would live like 'one of their imaginary Princeſſes, what Diſguſt muſt it be for her to deſcend from this 'imaginary State, to the mean Parts and Offices of Houſewifery?' Thus you may obſerve from the Sentiments of theſe great and pious Men, the miſchievous Conſequences that attend the frequenting Play-houſes, as well as reading prophane and unedifying Books; as they prove them hurtful in a civil or ſocial, as well as in a

religious Relation. But further; tho' my Experience is short, and Knowledge small, in the sublime Mysteries of Christianity, yet I have been induced to consider it both absurd and irrational to propose vain Amusements and Diversions to Christians, whose Conversation is in Heaven; who have tasted of the good Word of Life, witness'd of the Powers of the World to come, shar'd, in Part, of the Joys of Heaven, by divine Communion and Fellowship with God: For, as the Apostle says truly, "The Fellowship of all real Christians is with the Father, and with the Son, CHRIST JESUS; with whom, having sat in high and heavenly Places, they look down with holy Contempt on lower Enjoyments:' To prescribe, I say, to these earthly Pleasures and Delights, nay, vain and irrational Ones too, is, as the pious *Boyle* justly observes, as unreasonable, as if one *should imagine an Eagle could be dazzled with a Glow-worm, when, from his high Station, he had been newly gazing at the Sun.* And indeed were the common Recreations both innocent and lawful, a true Christian could not conceive any Delight in them, or in any Thing that tended to divert their Meditation, and carry them so far from God, whose Words and Presence are become more to them than their necessary Food; and even the Cares and Concerns of this Life, which, on various Occasions, must necessarily occupy the Thoughts of Christians, are irksome and burthensome to many; as they, in some Sort, deprive them of more near and intimate Communion and Intercourse with God;

who,

who, tho' he is that High and Holy One, that inhabits Eternity, and dwells in Light inaccessible by mortal Eyes; tho' Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth his Footstool, yet condescends by his Holy Spirit to tabernacle with Men, and stoop so low as to stand at the Door of our Hearts, and knock for an Entrance. *Behold! saith the Lord, I stand at the Door and knock, if any Man open to me, I will come in and sup with him, and he shall sup with me.* Thus, when we are made Partakers of this blessed and divine Communion and holy Supper, we are ready to cry out after this Manner, 'Tis good for us to be here; Lord! Evermore give us this Bread! I sometimes thought the royal Psalmist seem'd to be much in the Case or State I have mentioned; thirsting after God, as he himself expresses it, but often interrupted and carry'd away by the Avocations of his Kingdom, and Perplexities from his Enemies, at a greater Distance from God than was pleasing to him, and which he seems to have in View, and lament, when spreading his Cause before the Almighty, he complains of the Oppression from Men of the World, *who*, says he, *have their Portion in this Life.* And, on another Occasion, he describes some of the same Disposition, enquiring, *Who will shew us any* (temporal) *Good? But as for me, I shall be satisfied with thy Likeness; I will behold thy Face in Righteousness; Lord, lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me, then shall I rejoice more, than when Corn, Wine and Oil, encreaseth.* And again, *When I awake* (or am free from Interruption)

ruption) *I am ſtill with thee, where I drink in thy Preſence of the Fountain of Life, and in thy Light I ſee more Light; for bleſſed is the Man whom thou chooſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts; for in thy Preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at thy Right Hand are Rivers of Pleaſures for evermore!* And he pronounces the Man bleſſed, *whoſe Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and who meditates therein Day and Night.* Such Meditations of the Lord are ſweet unto his People, and makes them glad in his Preſence; and the ſpiritual Intercourſes, with which the Almighty in great Mercy and Condeſcenſion is pleaſed to favour his Servants and Children, are indeed in ſome Degree Foretaſtes of Heaven: For tho' the Apoſtle tells us, *Eye* (the Eye of the natural Man, who is devoted and enſlaved to earthly Things) *hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart* (of ſuch Men as theſe) *to conceive the Things which God hath prepar'd for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: For the Spirit ſearcheth all Things, yea, the deep Things of God: But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them* (while he remains in his natural and carnal State) *becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

But to proceed; I have partly told you what Recreations are conſider'd by us as unlawful for Chriſtians to be exerciſed in; and ſhall now, in the Words of one of our Worthies, tell you what we judge lawful or convenient. *Innocent Diverſiſements*, ſays he, *which may ſufficiently ſerve for*

Relaxation of the Mind, are these; Friends may visit one another; hear or read History; speak of the present or past Transactions; follow Gardening; use geometrical and mathematical Experiments, and such *Things of this Nature; in all which we are not to forget God.* To this let me add the Concurrence of the Bishop of *Cambray*, in his Rules for educating Youth; who, speaking of Recreations proper for a young Person, says thus: *There is no Need of fine Machines or Sights, theatrical Pomps or Expences, to recreate a young Woman; but an instructive Reading; a Labour which is by herself freely undertaken; a Walk, or a little innocent Conversation, which relaxes the Mind after hard Labour, and leaves a purer Joy in her, than of the most charming Musick, or studied Diversion.* And further, we may consider the Works and Order of Nature; *for the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handywork; Day unto Day uttereth Speech, and Night unto Night sheweth Knowledge: Thus the invisible Things of God are discerned* (by the Things that are visible) *even the Eternal Godhead.* By such Observations, says one of our Authors, *The Creation would no longer be a Riddle to us; the Heavens, Earth and Waters, with their respective various, and numerous Inhabitants; their Productions, Natures, Seasons, Sympathies, and Antypathies; their Use and Benefit, would be better understood by us; and an eternal Wisdom, Power, Majesty and Goodness, very conspicuous to us, thro' these sensible and passing Forms; the World wearing the Mark of its Maker, whose Stamp is every where visible, and the Characters legible to the Children of Wisdom:*

This

This would direct People in the Use of the World; for how could Man have the Conscience to abuse it, while they see the great Creator staring them in the Face, in all and every Part of it. And he adds; *As Man is consider'd as the Epitome of the World, we should not be ignorant of our own Make and Frame; a Glass, in which we should see that true, instructing and agreeable, Variety, which is to be observed in Nature to the Admiration of that Wisdom, and Adoration of that Power, that created and formed us.* These and such like Relaxations, from higher Attentions, do not exclude God; whereas it would be impious so much as to imagine, that the Smiles of God's Countenance, or his holy Presence, can in the least Degree be enjoy'd in the common Pastimes and Diversions of the World; 'tis not expected nor pretended to by any of the Votaries to Pleasure. On the contrary, how is the sacred Name of the Almighty daily and frequently prophaned, not only by profess'd Gamesters, but by Persons of both Sexes, who play, as they say, for Diversion, and who make no Scruple frequently to take God's holy Name in vain, and use it wickedly and absurdly to bless or curse their, as they term it, good or bad Fortune! And indeed it has been often Subject of Amazement and Sorrow to me, when I so frequently meet with, and observe this Impiety, even amongst Professors of Christianity of most Denominations, who irreverently, and, without Fear, take God's sacred Name into their Mouths in their ordinary and trivial Discourse, and vain Conversation; not considering that this Practice is an open and manifest Violation of one of God's Laws or Com-

mands, in which he declares, *He will not hold them guiltleſs that take his Name in vain* (which Precept they frequently repeat in their Worſhip.) And our Lord aſſures us, that for every idle Word that Men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an Account in the Day of Judgment; how much more then for this daily Breach of One, not the leaſt, of his Precepts? I would beg Leave to remind you, how careful and circumſpect *David* was in his Words; *I*, ſays he, *will take Heed to my Ways, that I ſin not with my Tongue; I will keep my Mouth as with a Bridle*, &c. And the Apoſtle *James* tells us poſitively, *That Perſon's Religion is vain who bridleth not his Tongue: That we ſuffer no corrupt Communication to proceed out of our Mouths*; but, on the contrary, *ſuch as is good, to the Uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter Grace to the Hearers.* One Mark of the Enemies of God is, that they prophane his Name. *Thine Enemies*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *take thy Name in vain, O God.* In the Life and Character of *Robert Boyle*, as an Honour to his Memory we are told, That he never mentioned the Name of the Almighty, but with the greateſt Reverence, and always made a Pauſe at the ſame Time: I wiſh the Example of ſo pious a Man may be more regarded, and the evil Conſequence of the above impious Practice more conſidered. But to return: The Manner in which we think it allowable to ſpend our leiſure Hours, as has been obſerv'd, does not exclude God; but ever admits and ſuggeſts ſome ſuitable edifying, moral and pious Reflections, never forgetting to have an Eye to God; and as we live in a Senſe of his Fear and Preſence, ſhort

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Ejaculations, or Breathings, which come from, will often aſcend to, God. On the contrary, where is the leaſt Room for God, among thoſe People who are ridiculouſly term'd *People of Faſhion*, eſpecially in *Great-Britain*, where the Hours of People of this Name are ſpent in Folly, Impertinence and Wickedneſs? As Home is burthenſome to Perſons of this Caſt, 'tis now faſhionable to go abroad to Breakfaſt, and, like thoſe prophane Perſons the Apoſtle *Peter* deſcribes, They count it Pleaſure to riot in the Day-time; ſome of theſe dance great Part of the Morning away, while others are entertained with Drollery, Mimick'ry and Buffoonery. When they are ſufficiently tired with this Levity and Wantonneſs, the next Appearance, of the Women at leaſt, is at the Mercer's, Milliner's, or Toy-ſhop, ſpending in Folly, Superfluity and Extravagance, while the Huſbands of ſome of them are perplexing their Brains how to ſupport his Wife's Vanity, which is now become his own, as he proudly conſiders it a Reproach to himſelf, that his Wife ſhould be leſs fine and faſhionable than his Neighbour's. The Toilet claims the Remainder of the Morning, 'till call'd upon at perhaps Three or Four o'Clock, for Dinner; and then ſhe is ſo hurried and uneaſy, that ſhe can't ſtay longer at her Glaſs to admire her Fopperies, that ſhe has little to do but quarrel with her Dinner or Servants, 'till the Hour of Viſiting or Diverſions, which poſſibly may continue till Three or Four next Morning. By the Account you have of one Day, you may eaſily conjecture how the whole Week is ſpent. The Buſineſs of this Week being over, let us now

ſee

ſee how the firſt Day of the next is employ'd, or whether any thing of the Chriſtian appears in their Behaviour on this Day. Having no Buſineſs to do on this idle Day, as many make it, ſome indulge and ſleep longer than uſual on other Days, except thoſe who uſe it as a Day of Exerciſe or Recreation, making Excurſions into the Country merely for Pleaſure. But let us attend thoſe who go to their reſpective Places of Worſhip regularly; theſe, by the prepoſterous, fantaſtical and ſplendid Dreſſes, of both Male and Female, would induce a Stranger to think were Idolators, reparing to ſome Heathen Temple, rather than the Worſhip of the true God, who beholds their Splendor * and Pride with Contempt, and every One that is proud will he abaſe; for it is ſaid, *The Lord of Hoſts hath purpoſed to ſtain the Pride of all earthly Glory.* But next, let us obſerve them in their Worſhip; and here again, we might imagine they were addreſſing ſome ſenſeleſs dumb Idol, rather than the great Searcher of Hearts: For if we may be allow'd to judge by the Evidence of our Senſes, when we ſee the Eyes of the greateſt Part of the Congregation wandring abroad, on the Faces or Dreſſes of each other, we may certainly conclude their Hearts are not at Home, or intent on their Worſhip: But how monſtrous and impious is the Behaviour of theſe People, pretending to be employed in the Service of the Supreme Being, when we behold

* *Are God's Eyes charm'd thy Veſtments to behold,*
Glaring in Gems, and bright with glitt'ring Gold? WATTS.
---------- The Sacrifices he requires,
Are Hearts which Love and Zeal inſpires;
And Vows with ſtricteſt Care made good.

hold them bowing and paying Homage to each other, ſometimes in the midſt of their Worſhip. This irreligious Conduct I have not only been an Eye Witneſs of, but in the Practice of it, when I profeſſed with you; on which Behaviour, as well as other Parts of Indevotion, I have ſince reflected with Horror; and found our Lord's Words, on ſeveral Occaſions, veryfied in myſelf; *I had been indeed worſhipping I knew not what; therefore in vain was all the Formalities and Ceremonies I was performing outwardly, when I received no inward or ſpiritual Benefit.* A certain Clergyman, now living, as far as I know, (in his Remarks on the Levity and irreverent Conduct of People in this falſe Devotion) wiſhes *Their Prayers may not be found in the Catalogue of their Sins.* And another adviſes them, when at their Prayers, *to pauſe, and aſk themſelves, if they really do pray?* I have been greatly concerned, when I have thought that ſuch Pretences to Worſhip can be conſider'd no other (if I may be allow'd the Expreſſion) than affronting the Almighty to his Face; and that he may take up the ſame Complaint as he did of old againſt the *Jews*, ſaying, *This People draw nigh to me with their Tongues and their Lips, but their Hearts are far from me.* And now the Worſhip is over, let us obſerve if we can hear any Remarks on the Sermon: No ſurely; that was not the Buſineſs that principally concern'd them; but the Faſhions and Garbs of one another ingroſs the whole Obſervation, as ſoon as they are diſmiſſed, and are commonly the Subject of Converſation moſt part of the remaining Day.

But

But when we consider the Practice and Preparation of the foregoing Week, the Horror and Amazement we must certainly have been fill'd with, while we are reflecting, will cease; and we shall conclude with Regret, That better cannot be expected from People, while they remain in such an inconsiderate, irreligious, and unhappy Situation! The Impiety of a Life thus spent in this Circle of Madness, Folly and false Devotion, is sufficient, one would think, to provoke and draw down the Indignation of the Almighty on the Heads of such Transgressors, with whom he has long suffer'd, in order to bring them to Repentance. And I have been led to admire and adore the long Forbearance and Mercy of the Majesty of Heaven, who is thus daily affronted and provoked by his Creatures; Creatures too of his Pleasure, whose Life, Breath and Being, depend on his Will; and who placed us here on this Earth to serve him our Creator, by glorifying him with our Bodies, Souls and Spirits. But alas! instead of giving the Honour due to his Name, or acknowledging him in all our Ways, as we are exhorted, 'tis impossible that People in this Course of Life that I have described, can acknowledge God in any of their Ways; and that in the Room of having him in all their Thoughts, they take certain and sure Measures to exclude him from all their Thoughts. And when I have sometimes been reflecting on the common Expression made use of by many of these Sort of Christians, when they would confirm something they are going to assert for Truth, irreverently use these Words, *As I hope to be saved*, I have been much affect-

ed;

ed; for how People, who purſue theſe Steps, can rationally hope to arrive at Heaven, I cannot conceive. But ſuppoſing it poſſible to obtain it in their own carnal Way, how wou'd, or cou'd they reliſh the Pleaſure ſaid to be at God's Right Hand, or delight in his Preſence, when they have had no Acquaintance, Communion or Fellowſhip, with him on Earth? What would they think of ſpending an Eternity in his Service and Praiſe, when the very Mention of Religion, and the Things of God, are irkſome and troubleſome in Time? And it is now become unfaſhionable and mean, and the Mark of a puſillanimous Spirit, ſo much as to inſinuate any Care or Concern about their poor immortal Souls. But let not any deceive themſelves, and hope to obtain Heaven and Happineſs on eaſier Terms than the Almighty has propoſed: For if we will credit the ſacred Writings, none but thoſe who have ſincerely repented of their evil Ways, and turn'd from them; who have lov'd, fear'd and ſerv'd God here below, and who have gain'd the Victory over their ſinful Luſts and Paſſions, can be admitted into this glorious Manſion of Bliſs (nor none but thoſe who are properly qualified for a Part in the heavenly Choir, who can ſing the Song of the Redeemed) where the happy Employment of the Righteous will be praiſing God, and giving Glory to his Name; as *John* (call'd the Divine) teſtifies; *I ſaw*, ſays he, *thoſe who had gotten the Victory, with Harps in their Hands, ſinging the Song of* Moſes, *the Servant of the Lord, and the Song of the Lamb,*

saying, Great and Marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints! Who shall not fear thee, O Lord! and glorify thy Name! And every Creature which is in Heaven praised God, saying, Blessing and Honour, Glory and Power, be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever! And every Order of Angels continually crying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts! And those who are redeemed, whose Robes are wash'd in the Blood of the Lamb, who are arrived at this holy Habitation, not thro' Pomp and Luxury, but thro' great Tribulation, stand before the Throne of God, and serve him Night and Day in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell amongst them, and lead them to Fountains of living Water, and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.

If this be the happy Situation of the Blessed above, as we have no Reason to doubt but it is, examine yourselves, I beseech you, and see how you are prepar'd and qualify'd for such a Place and Condition; and remember 'tis the Living only, those whom CHRIST hath redeemed from the Power of the Grave of Sin, and quicken'd, by the Resurrection of his Holy Spirit, to a Life of Holiness, that can truly praise God; those who are dead in Trespasses and Sin, cannot celebrate his Praise, nor sing the Song of the ransomed Ones. Therefore you who are as asleep, in a carnal, easy and careless State, hear the Voice of the Son of God, which speaks in your Conscience, saying,

'Awake,

' Awake, arise from the Dead, and CHRIST shall give thee Life; stand in Awe, and Sin not; commune with your own Hearts, and be still; retire there, and see how the Case stands between God and your own Souls; acquaint yourselves with God, and be at Peace :' For I testify to you this Day, that I have witnessed his Peace and Favour to be better than Life; for which my Heart, as well as my Lips, have often return'd, to his great Name, high Praises and Thanksgivings! O that many may be made sensible of his Favour to their Souls! that they may see, and fear, and turn unto the Lord, and trust in his Name: You who are afar off from God, draw near, and behold his Goodness, and taste it; and you who are near, with me, acknowledge his Might. ' Times of Ignorance God winked at; but now, in this Gospel-Day, he commands all Men, every where, to repent; as Life and Immortality is brought to Light, through the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST;' whose Gospel you profess to rejoice in: But if those, called Christians (whom God hath known, above all the Families of the Earth) rebel against the Light, your Punishment will be the greater, according to the Proportion of Knowledge and Grace received: For that Servant who knows his Lord's Will, and prepares not himself, neither does according to his Will, *shall be beaten with many Stripes.* Bring your Deeds therefore to the Light of CHRIST in your own Consciences, and see if they are wrought in God: Remember why some formerly refused to bring their Deeds to this Light; it was because it

would manifeſt that they were Evil, and therefore reproved by it. And tho' the Proſpect may appear gloomy and unpleaſant to ſome, and you may be unwilling to break your falſe Peace, and diſturb a Reſt you have created to yourſelves, and find a ſtronger Propenſity to gratify than croſs your ſenſual Inclinations and Appetites; tho' you may be averſe to an Undertaking which is likely to prove troubleſome; a Task ſo diſguſtful and diſagreeable, as changing our old Cuſtoms and Manners; which you are told by the Apoſtle, muſt be done: *All who are in CHRIST JESUS, muſt be new Creatures; Old Things muſt paſs away, all Things muſt become new, and all of God.* Theſe you may poſſibly think hard Sayings; but remember, the Propenſities of Fleſh and Blood cannot enter with you into the Kingdom of God; whoſe Love, when you are really in Poſſeſſion of it, will make *hard Things, eaſy, and bitter Things, ſweet.* Many are diſcouraged and afraid to enter upon a religious Courſe of Life, as it will, they imagine, retrench their Liberties, and render their Lives unpleaſant, gloomy and melancholy: This, indeed, is one of the Subtilties of Satan; one of his evil Reports of the good *Land of Promiſe*, which 'tis his Advantage to prevent your Entrance into. But don't believe him, nor his evil Spies; he was a *Liar from the Beginning*, and remains ſo to this Day. Though the Path you muſt tread, is narrow, and will not admit of many Things which Pride has introduced, and the Tyrant, *Cuſtom*, maintains and ſupports (and which by the Way, you will have

have no Affection for) yet there is Room enough to enjoy the neceſſary Things of this Life, in Moderation: Lament, you will indeed, becauſe you have been ſo long Sinners, and did not turn to, love and obey God, ſooner; and now will you mourn over him, whom you often pierced with your Sins: Grieve, perhaps, you may; but one Reaſon will be, That the *World lies in Wickedneſs:* But I dare venture to aſſert, that no true and real Chriſtian, ever repented that he was ſo; for all ſuch Experience, in Truth, that God's Service, is perfect Freedom; and that all *His Ways, are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all his Paths, Paths of Peace.* But farther, you who may be unwilling to enter upon this new but neceſſary Work, this one Thing abſolutely needful, remember and conſider, that CHRIST poſitively aſſures us, *That except a Man be born again* (of the Spirit) *he can in no wiſe enter the Kingdom of Heaven*, John iii. 3. And that if ever you are ſaved, it muſt be according to God's own Preſcription, *by the Waſhing of Regeneration, and Renewing* (Power) *of the Holy Ghoſt*; by his ſanctifying Word and Operation; which is able to do more abundantly for you, than you can ask or think: Therefore, let me entreat you, not to forſake your own Mercies: God is waiting to be gracious to you; his Hand is full of Bleſſings; accept, I beſeech you, of the Offers of his Grace, and anſwer to his Call, while the Day of your Viſitation laſts, leſt when you call, he ſhould not anſwer; for he has declared, That His *Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man, for that he*

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alſo is Fleſh. Comply then with the Almighty's Terms of Salvation, and do not vainly hope or imagine He will be brought down to yours: Don't think yourſelves ſafe, tho' many of you may be innocent from great Tranſgreſſions; remember, all and every Unrighteouſneſs is Sin: But many flatter themſelves, and believe, if they are not chargeable with groſs Immoralities, that little Sins will not be noted by the Almighty; that Satan, the World, and the Fleſh, are ſo powerful, that they cannot get the better of thoſe little Weakneſſes and Frailties ſo incident to human Nature: and as they do not, on their Principles, expect to be freed from them on this Side the Grave, they do not ſo much as deſire or attempt to obtain a Conqueſt over them; but depend on God's Mercy, hoping he will not be extreme to mark ſmall Offences; and if they are exact in ſome moral Duties, they imagine the Almighty will compound for little Reſerves. That God is eſſential Mercy, I grant; but don't forget, that he is alſo Sovereign Juſtice, and will not condemn the Innocent; neither will he ſtep aſide from his Equity, to acquit the Guilty; for as *the Righteouſneſs of the Righteous ſhall be upon him*, ſo ſhall the *Wickedneſs of the Wicked be upon him*, Ezek. xviii. 20. *Say ye to the Righteous, it ſhall be well with him, for he ſhall eat the Fruit of his Doings: But woe unto the Wicked, it ſhall be ill with him; for the Reward of his Hands ſhall be given him.*

But farther, theſe trite Arguments and Excuſes, which are ſo generally made uſe of to de-

defend evil Practices, appear as weak as the Frailties they plead for; and I think, if I may be allow'd the Expreſſion, People make the Almighty a very injurious Compliment, when they aſcribe greater Power and Strength to Satan, than to the Moſt High. But perhaps they may imagine the Almighty will diſpenſe with ſome of his Attributes, ſince they allow him one in a more abſolute Degree. And now give me Leave to tell you what the great Proteſtant Advocate, *Chillingſworth*, ſays on this Subject, in a Sermon preached before King *Charles* the Firſt (if I remember right) which take it in his own Words and Senſe. 'Some 'aſcribe a Sort of Omnipotency to the World, 'the Fleſh, and the Devil; and that God neither 'does, nor will give ſufficient Strength to re-'ſiſt them; which Opinion he labours to explode, 'and poſitively affirms, that, by the Aſſiſtance 'of the Grace of God, it is in our Power to 'reſiſt them; and ſhews the Neceſſity of ſo 'doing, from what we are ſo frequently and 'plainly aſſured of in the *New-Teſtament*, viz. 'That without actual and effectual Mortifica-'tion, with actual and eſſential Amendment of 'Life, Regeneration and Sanctification, no Hope, 'no Poſſibility of Salvation. Thus you ſee, 'ſays he, all the divine Writers of the *New-'Teſtament*, with one Conſent, and with one 'Mouth, proclaim the Neceſſity of real Holi-'neſs, and labour to diſenchant us from the 'vain Fancy, That Men may be ſaved by ſor-'rowing for their Sins, and intending to leave 'them, without effectual Converſion and Re-

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'formation of Life: Which, it may be fear'd, 'has ſent Thouſands of Souls to Hell, in a 'golden Dream of Heaven:' And therefore he very juſtly apprizes his Audience, 'That it 'was not the pleaſing themſelves, of being of 'ſuch a Sect or Profeſſion, together with going 'to Church, ſaying or hearing of Prayers, re-'ceiving of Sacraments, hearing, repeating or 'preaching of Sermons; with Zeal for Cere-'monies, or Zeal againſt them; or, in-'deed, with any Thing elſe, than conſtant 'Piety towards God, Juſtice and Charity to 'our Neighbours; Temperance, Chaſtity and 'Sobriety towards ourſelves; we ſhall one Day 'find we have not mocked God, but ourſelves; 'and ſhall have our Portion among Hypo-'crites! We make the Church a Stage where-'on to act our Part, and playing our Pagean-'try; there we make a Profeſſion every Day 'of confeſſing our Sins, with humble, lowly, 'penitent and obedient Hearts; and yet when 'we have talked after this Rate, twenty, thir-'ty, or forty Years, our Hearts, for the moſt 'Part, continue as proud, as impenitent, and 'as diſobedient, as they were in the Begin-'ning*. We make great Proteſtations when 'we meet and aſſemble together to render 'Thanks to Almighty God, for the great Be-'nefits received at his Hands: And if this were 'to

* A certain Author, in ſome Remarks on the Confeſſion and Litany in the Book of Common Prayer, exclaims after this Manner; 'What! always learning, and never coming to the Knowledge of Truth? Miſe-rable Sinners you find us, and miſerable you leave us!, And, in the Caſe of Confeſſion, he thus ſtates the Matter; 'Suppoſe thou hadſt a Son, and ſhouldſt daily let him know what thou wouldſt have him do, and he ſhould

‘ to be performed with Words, with Hoſannas,
‘ Hallelujahs, Gloria Patri's, Pſalms, Hymns,
‘ and ſuch like outward Matters; peradventure
‘ we ſhould do it very ſufficiently: But, in the
‘ mean Time, in our Lives and Actions, we
‘ provoke the Almighty, and that to his Face,
‘ with all Variety of grievous and bitter Pro-
‘ vocations; we do thoſe Things which he has
‘ aſſured us to be odious unto Him, and con-
‘ trary to his Nature. And therefore he la-
‘ ments to ſee, that the Power of Godlineſs,
‘ almoſt in all Places, was decried and vaniſhed;
‘ the Form and Profeſſion of it only remain-
‘ ing; that the Spirit and Soul of Religion was,
‘ for the moſt Part, gone, and only the out-
‘ ward Carcaſs or Shadow of it left behind! His
‘ whole Diſcourſe was to preſs the abſolute
‘ Neceſſity of Converſion from Sin, and to
‘ ſhew that nothing ſhort of it would ſtand
‘ one in any Stead. That none were CHRIST's,
‘ but thoſe who have crucified the Fleſh, with
‘ the Affections and Luſts: They that have
‘ not done ſo, let them be as ſorrowful as they
‘ pleaſe, they, as yet, are none of CHRIST's:
‘ And he cries out, Lord! what a Multitude
‘ of Chriſtians are there in the World, that do
‘ not belong to CHRIST! And then goes on;
‘ It is not a wiſhing, but a working Faith:
‘ Not a wiſhing you were a new Creature;
‘ but being a new Creature: Not a wiſhing you

ſhould Day by Day, Week by Week, and Year by Year, provoke thee to thy Face, and ſhould ſay, Father, I have not done what thou commandedſt me to do: but I have done quite the contrary; and ſhould continue to provoke thee to thy Face, once, or oftner, every Week, wou'dſt thou not think him a rebellious Child, and that his Application to thee was mere Mockery? And would it not occaſion thee to diſinherit him?

'had kept, nor a ſorrowing you have not kept, 'nor purpoſing vainly to keep; but the keeping his Commandments, muſt prevail with 'Him, as it is not to the Willing, but to the 'Obedient the Promiſe is given. But is not 'this, *ſays he*, preaching Works, as the *Papiſts* 'do? No, certainly; but it is to preach Works, 'as CHRIST and his Apoſtles do; it is to preach 'the Neceſſity of them, which no good Proteſtant, no good Chriſtian ever denied; but it is 'not to preach the Merit of them, which is the 'Error of the *Papiſts*.' By this Author's Manner of Preaching Works, we may infer, that he includes all Chriſtian, as well as moral Virtues; by ſaying, 'We muſt become new Creatures, and keep all God's Commandments:' And I would obſerve to ſome, whom I have elſewhere ſaid ſeem to confine Chriſtianity to moral Duties, and, in ſome Sort, to exclude the Duties of the firſt Table, which we are as punctually to perform, as thoſe of the Second; what will it avail us, tho' we be exact in moral Works, if the Motive of them do not come from God; for tho' we do all imaginable Juſtice to Mankind, tho' we give all our Goods to the Poor, and ſuffer for what we think our Religion, yet the Apoſtle *Paul* tells us, we may be deficient in the moſt material Point, if we have not *Charity*; or do not act from that which ought to be the Spring and Motive of all our Actions, *viz. Love to God.* The young Man, who came to CHRIST, had, as he ſaid, kept the Commands contain'd in the ſecond Table, and yet we find him unfit for eternal Life; he

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was negatively good; he had not done any Murther, nor committed Adultery; he had not ſtole from, nor defrauded his Neighbour; he had refrain'd from theſe Evils; but we do not find he had yet learn'd to do well: And when Obedience to a poſitive and particular Injunction CHRIST, our Lord, was pleaſed to lay upon him (ſuppoſed) to prove his Love and Obedience to God; when it was required of him to quit, or exchange, his earthly Poſſeſſions, tho' with great Advantage, no leſs than an Inheritance eternal in the Heavens, and take up a Croſs to his own Will and Deſires, and follow CHRIST, in this Way of Self-denial; behold he Coward like withdraws, and departs, we are told, ſad and dejected, being grieved with the Saying: This unhappy young Man's Refuſal of the Kingdom, or Eternal Life, on our Lord's Conditions, occaſioned him, with an apparent Concern, to ſay, *How hardly ſhall they that have*, or in his following Words, *that truſt in Riches, enter into the Kingdom of God!* And, on another Occaſion, he further declares; That *whoſoever came to Him, and took not up his Croſs, and denied himſelf, and hated not Father and Mother, Wife, Children, Brethren and Siſters, yea, and his own Life*, (when brought in Competition of his Duty and Love to God) *he could not be his Diſciple*; and, conſequently, unworthy of eternal Life.

I ſhall now give you the Senſe of Dr. *Whitby*, as well as my own, with Reference to the Precept of Self-denial, *&c.* He introduces his Subject by paraphraſing on *Mat.* xiii. 22. *Luke*

viii 14. *Mark* iv. 19. all which Remarks I shall pass over, and only observe what he says on part of the said 19th Verse. *The lusting after other Things; hurtful Things, which choak the Seed or* Word of *Life in us--The Lust of the Eye*, he tells us, *are our Desires of gay Apparel, rich Furniture, and such like, as by St.* John *are stiled, the Pride of Life: Desire of popular Applause, or high Estimation in the World: Advancement to high Posts, or great Places, above others: And, lastly, Our excessive Love to our Relatives; as Parents, Wives, Children, Friends,* &c. *For when these Affections prove Temptations to Sin, as the Excess of them certainly does; they will then be obstructive of that Influence, the Word of Life should have upon us: And St.* John *informs us, that all these are not of the Father; but of the World,* John ii. 15, 16. *And that if we love or set our Hearts upon them, the Love of the Father is not in us---Therefore CHRIST requires us to deny ourselves in all these Things, to love them less, or hate them* (comparatively) *that we may be his Disciples.* And next I shall endeavour to illustrate, by one Instance, among the many I have experienced, how I understand the above Precept, by saying how I conducted myself in a Circumstance wherein Self-denial appear'd requisite and necessary to be put in Practice by me: When I was conducted, by my great Leader, into the narrow Path of Self-denial, I was sensible that I must part with many hurtful and superfluous Things, I had been accustomed to; the Way was too narrow to admit of Pride in any Shape or Form; and

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as Superfluity in Apparel, as well as many other Instances of Luxury, appear'd to me inconsistent with the Doctrines of Christianity, and the more particular Instructions and Admonitions of several of the Apostles, I laid aside several Things I thought inconsistent with the Profession of a Christian; and disused idle and unmeaning Compliments; and further, being convinced of the Principles of the *People called Quakers*, I joined to that Society. Thus I became singular, and consequently despicable to my Children, and some of my Acquaintance and Friends; who not only profes'd a Dislike, but a Concern that I should appear in so contemptible a Manner, and so very different from what I usually had done. Here I had a Cross to bear. What was now to be done! I was certain I had acted with Sincerity, and done, according to the best of my Understanding, what I apprehended the Duty of every common Christian, *viz.* To part with all Superfluities of Naughtiness, which were now beginning to be burthensome to me, as I gradually experienced, Old Things passing away, and new Desires and Affections to take Place in my Heart. I frequented the Meetings of these People, as I was convinced the Doctrines they taught, and their Mode of Worship, were free from Ceremonies and Superstition, and most agreeable to the Observations I had made in reading the sacred Writings, *&c*, and what was most valuable and worthy Imitation, that the true and genuine Members of this Society, walk consistently and agreeably to the Rules and Maxims of CHRIST

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and his Apoſtles. However, to be deſpiſed by my Acquaintance, Friends and Children, was a Trial hard to bear: But whoſoever he be of you, *that taketh not up his Croſs, and hateth not* (comparatively) *Father, Mother, Children*, &c. ſays our bleſſed Lord, *is not worthy of me, and cannot be my Diſciple.*

And, though, in this Inſtance, I endeavoured to pleaſe God rather than Men, I'll venture to aſſert, that few have a more natural Tenderneſs, and affectionate Regard, in both, or all theſe Relations than myſelf. And, indeed, when the Love of God is received into our Hearts, 'tis ſo far from leſſening or contracting our lawful Affections, that it enlarges our Hearts, in a peculiar Manner, to our Relatives and Friends; and excites in us a loving and benevolent Diſpoſition towards all Mankind, whoſe Happineſs we entirely wiſh: *For if any Man ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar; for he who loveth not his Brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* And this Commandment we have from him, *That he who loveth God, will love his Brother alſo; and we love God becauſe he firſt loved us:* Therefore, if God ſo loved us, we ought to love one another, and do Good to all; but, *more eſpecially to the Houſhold of Faith*; with whom we are made one in CHRIST. But further, among many Inſtances of Self-denial, as I have above remark'd, I found Pride, in Apparel, abſolutely neceſſary to be avoided; and tho' Pride, in every Species and Appearance, is abominable and odious in the Sight of

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the Almighty, yet it seems particularly against this Branch of it, that the Prophet *Isaiah* exclaims in his third Chapter: And, I am sorry to observe, that the Charge of this odious, as well as irrational Passion of the Mind, equally affects the Male, as the Female Part of my Species. *But what renders it the more notable, is, that we don't remark, in preceeding Ages, any Prohibition, in the Article of Apparel, ever so much as mention'd; or any Caution given to Men, to avoid Superfluity, or Gaiety, of this Kind*; as if this Folly and Weakness, was indeed incident and peculiar to Women only. And we may remark, from History, that wise Men always neglected and despised Gaiety in their Clothes; and, whenever any Vanity of this Sort appeared, tho' in young Men, it was look'd upon with Contempt, and derided by reasonable Men, who consider'd it as a Mark or Indication of weak Intellects. But however that be, I shall take the Liberty of asking my own Sex, who seem most concerned in the Judgements pronounced by the Prophet against the Pride of Women, their Opinion of the Chapter I have mentioned. After the Prophet had been enumerating the great Disadvantages and Calamities the Children or People of *Israel* had brought upon themselves by their Sin and Disobedience, for which, he tells them, the Lord would assuredly enter into Judgment, by bringing these Calamities suddenly upon them; he adds, *Moreover, the Lord saith, because the Daughters of* Zion *are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth Necks, and wanton Eyes, walking, and*

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mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their Feet: Therefore, in that Day (the Day of his Judgements) *ſaith the Lord, I will take away the Bravery of their tinkling Ornaments from about their Feet, and their Cauls, and their round Tires like the Moon, the Chains, and the Bracelets, and the Mufflers, the Bonnets, and the Ornaments of the Legs, and the Head-bands, and the Tablets, and the Ear-rings, the Rings, and Noſe-jewels, the changeable Suits of Apparel, and Mantles, and the Wimples, and the Criſping-pins, the Glaſſes, and the fine Linnen, the Hoods, and the Veils. And it ſhall come to paſs, that inſtead of ſweet Smells, there ſhall be a Stink; inſtead of a Girdle, a Rent; inſtead of well ſet Hair, Baldneſs; inſtead of a Stomacher, a girding with Sackcloth; and Burning, inſtead of Beauty.* And hence let us obſerve the Effects of Pride, in Apparel too, which many think ſo inſignificant; and ſome have been ſo abſurd as to ſay, that the Ornaments, &c. enumerated by the Prophet, were only unlawful to the *Jewiſh* Women, who poſſibly had borrow'd their Faſhions from the *Heathen*, with whom they were forbid any Sort of Commerce; neither were they to walk after the Cuſtoms and Manners of the *Heathen* Nations. But we may remark, theſe Things were not to be taken from them, becauſe they had borrow'd the Forms of them from the neighbouring Nations; but becauſe *the Daughters of* Zion *are proud and haughty, and walk with ſtretched forth Necks*, when they are adorn'd with all the Bravery of theſe Ornaments; therefore the Lord will deprive

prive them of the Things they made ſubſervient to their Pride and Vanity; the Sin of which is equally odious and abhorent to God, in us, the Deſcendants of the *Gentiles*, as it was in the *Jews*: Nor does the Prohibition of Sin, or the Command or Precept of Holineſs, loſe one Whit of its Force and Energy, for being deliver'd two or three thouſand, or ſeventeen hundred Years ago. As the Almighty is unchangeable in his eſſential Holineſs; *for with Him is no Variableneſs, or Shadow of Turning*: Sin, that was Sin ſome Ages back, muſt abſolutely be ſo at this Day.

But hear now what ſome of the Chriſtian Apoſtles enjoin, when they were giving Directions to the Churches of CHRIST, 1 *Tim.* ii. 9. and which Dr. *Whitby* thus notes: *In like Manner alſo I will that* Chriſtian *Women adorn themſelves in modeſt Apparel, with Shamefacedneſs and Sobriety*; not ſetting out themſelves *with broider'd Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or coſtly Array*; but with that Ornament *which* beſt *becomes Women profeſſing Godlineſs*; that is, *with good Works.* And next the Apoſtle *Peter*, in his particular Inſtructions to Chriſtian Women, he thus expreſſes himſelf; *Whoſe adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and wearing Gold, or putting on of Apparel; but let it be with the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the Sight of God of great Price: For after this Manner, in the old Times, the holy Women alſo, who truſted in God, adorned themſelves.* And the above

cited Author, in his Comment on the Words of both these Apostles, gives you his Sense thus: *It seems evident, that all Attire, which, by the Richness and Costliness of it, shews any Pride or Vanity of Spirit, or any Ambition to excel others, is forbid by the Apostle's Words: All great Concernment, Care and Study, to appear in such Attire, as if it were our truest Ornament, and that which made us excel, and be more honourable than others: This Vanity and Pride, this Esteem of, and Concern for, these Things, being not well consistent with Sobriety, and much less with the* Profession of true Godliness. *And here* (continues he) *'tis worthy to be noted by the Women, that this Precept ought not to be slighted by them, as of little Moment, seeing it is so carefully inculcated by the two chief Apostles of the Jews and Gentiles, St.* Peter *and St.* Paul. *And the contrary is represented as a Practice opposite to Godliness:* And he subjoins; *Let them especially remark the Character here given of a Christian Woman,* viz. *That she is one who does not only profess and declare, that she serves and worships God; but also doth shew forth Godliness in her Life and Conversation. And let the Men note hence, that if it be so unbecoming a Christian Woman to be thus concern'd in adorning and tricking up her Body, it must be much more unbecoming a Christian Man to put on such Attire, which makes him truly deserve the Name of* Fop. And next let us hear the Opinion of one of the Antients, *viz. Clemens* of *Alexandria*; he tells us, *That Women, who wear Gold, and plait the Hair, have not the Image of God in the inward Man;*

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and that the apoſtolical Conſtitutions forbid Women to wear exquiſite Garments, which were fitted to deceive, or Gold Rings, &c. And *Jamblicus*, in the Life of *Pythagoras*, ſays, *That no free Women wore Gold, but lewd Women only.* Hence you may obſerve, that the People called *Quakers*, are not ſingular in the Conſtruction they put on, or Senſe they conſider the Apoſtle's Words in, in the Article of Apparel; and that our Particularity in this Matter does not proceed from Whim, Caprice or Fancy, or any Affectation of being ſingular; but from a Conviction in our own Underſtanding, that Superfluity and Luxury, which has its Riſe from Pride, is inconſiſtent and contrary to the humble, lowly, unambitious Temper and Spirit, of Chriſtianity. One Argument ſome have made uſe of to ſupport the Vanity of gay and coſtly Clothing, was this; That the Pride was not in the Clothes, but in the Heart; An Aſſertion I have greatly prov'd true by my own Experience. I could not imagine there could be any moral or inherent Evil in a Piece of gay Silk; for I know full well, that Pride proceeds from a vain and ambitious Heart; and that if it had not its Reſidence and Seat there, it would not appear in the Habit or Garb. But tho' ſome perhaps may allow me to be acquainted with, and therefore a Judge of my own Heart; yet, wou'd it not border upon Uncharitableneſs, to alledge that all Perſons who wear gay Clothing, are conſequently proud and ambitious? I anſwer; Tho' it may not be ſafe to judge in every Caſe according to the Sight of the Eye, yet our

Lord seems to allow us the Evidence of our Senses pretty generally. *Every Tree*, says he, *is known by its Fruit. Of Thorns Men do not gather Figs, nor off a Bramble-bush Grapes.* And then gives us the following Mark or Criterion to judge by, *Ye shall know them by their Fruits.* Thus when I see Fruits of the same Kind produced by others, which I certainly know proceeded from the bitter Root of Pride in my own Heart, I do not think it an uncharitable, but a natural and rational Conclusion, that they spring from the like evil Root in others. *A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit. A good Man, out of the good Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is good; but an evil Man, out of the evil Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is evil.* I have heard it objected, that Persons, who have always been accustomed to Finery from their Infancy, are not commonly proud of it; it becomes thereby so familiar to them, that they have not such high Thoughts of themselves when gaily attir'd as many imagine; neither value Dress and splendid Equipages, *&c.* at so high a Rate, as those do to whom they have not been so habitual; this I have thought may be partly true; but notwithstanding I have consider'd, that tho' these Things are habitual and familiar to many, yet People of this Character are not so ignorant, as not to be sensible that they are respected and courted according to the Appearance they make in the World; and should any One propose to such to lay aside their Splendor

dor and Gaiety, we ſhould ſoon ſee theſe Matters are not ſo indifferent to them as ſome may think; they only ſeem more careleſs and eaſy about them, becauſe they have been accuſtom'd to Pride of this Sort longer than others, and therefore leſs affected with it, having better learn'd the Art to conceal it: And if every One would be ſo juſt to themſelves, as candidly and impartially to enquire and ask their own Hearts, from whence proceeds their Fondneſs for Splendor, Shew and Pomp, eſpecially in this Article, they would be obliged to confeſs, or at leaſt not to deny, that Pride was at the Bottom.

Part of a Converſation I happen'd to have with a faſhionable Woman in *Great Britain*, will ſerve to confirm what I have obſerv'd. She aſſerted ſhe was free from Pride, tho' ſhe did adorn herſelf in a gay and ſplendid Manner. I ask'd her if ſhe could be as well ſatisfied and content in a plain Dreſs, and Stuff or Woollen Gown, as with the gay Silks ſhe uſually wore? She anſwer'd yes. I queried why ſhe then dreſſed ſo gay? She anſwer'd, that ſhe might appear agreeable to others. I ask'd her why ſhe was ſo much concern'd to pleaſe others with her fine Clothes, &c. She ſaid, it was leaſt ſhe ſhould be deſpiſed for the Meaneſs of her Appearance. I ask'd her whence proceeded that Fear? Here, I think, ſhe was ſilent, being reduced to an Extremity, which proved the Source of her Vanity to be nothing leſs than Pride, in ſpight of all her boaſted Humility. I have often thought, our Fondneſs for Trifles, Pomp, Shew and Noiſe,

may

may be attributed to Inconſideration: For did we reflect, examine and compare Things, we ſhould certainly make very different Deductions, Concluſions, and Eſtimations, from what the Generality of Mankind are wont to do. And I am certain, from our Ignorance of Divine and Heavenly Things, proceeds our Fondneſs and inordinate Deſires for ſenſual and earthly Pleaſures and Enjoyments. And indeed ſince I have thought at all, I mean to any good Purpoſe, I have been amazed at my own Stupidity and Folly, when I have conſider'd and recollected how anxious I had formerly been till I was in Poſſeſſion of this gay Silk, and the other fine Lace; and I have bluſhed with an holy Shame, when I reflected how I had ſometimes doated on a Ribbon, or any other Toy or Bauble, that had but the Title of *new-faſhion'd* annex'd to it! One common Argument for Superfluity and Luxury of all Kinds, is, that it encourages and ſupports Trade; and that the Bread and Subſiſtence of Thouſands depend on new Faſhions: But thoſe who offer this Reaſon, do not conſider how many, on the contrary, are ruin'd and undone by contributing to what is alledged the Support of Trade; this being ſo manifeſt, eſpecially in *Great-Britain*, that it needs no other Proof but the Evidence of our Eyes, if we will but look round and conſider how many Families are reduced to Poverty, Wretchedneſs and Miſery, from this very Source Pride, from whence ſprings Luxury, in all its hideous Forms and Shapes. The Diſorder, as a late Writer obſerves, is become *almoſt epidemical*,

as the inferior Clafs of People endeavour all in their Power to appear as grand and fashionable as their Superiors. And when I have consider'd, how usual it is for the lower Part of Mankind to be sway'd by the Example of the higher, I have thought it greatly behoved People of Rank and Condition to exhibit Patterns of Humility, Temperance, Sobriety and Moderation, with every other Christian Virtue, to their Inferiors. But I have heard it objected, that costly and splendid Apparel, &c. is necessary to make and support a proper Distinction between Persons of high and low Degree. The Argument I have thought weak, and unworthy to be offer'd by a Christian, as I am of Opinion, every reasonable Person will grant that Piety and Virtue (not Gold and tinsel Ornaments) ought to distinguish and render truly honourable the higher Rank of People. Besides, it is evident, that these Distinctions are not kept up and maintain'd by costly Attire, &c. for we may daily observe, that Persons of the lowest Rank, with Respect to their Offices and Employments, are oftentimes very wealthy; and these adorn themselves in as pompous a Manner, and have as grand Houses, Furniture, Equipages, &c. as those who are greatly superior to them in other Respects.

But allowing many Things the Title of Superfluity and Luxury, and therefore unlawful to be used by Christians; it has been queried how are all these Fashion-mongers, who are supported by making and vending Things of this Nature, to be provided for, if they should

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give up their Employments, which you *Quakers* say are contrary to Christianity, and therefore unlawful? I would first humbly propose to People to examine themselves, and see if they are Christians; not nominal, but real Christians; such as are led, ruled, guided and directed, by the Spirit of CHRIST; those who are not, are none of his, whatever they may pretend to; *for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they* (and they only) *are the Children of God.* These will find, that it is not lawful for them to support any Trade, or use any Employment, which is inconsistent, or clashes with the Doctrines and Rules they profess to be govern'd by; such are not often at a Loss for some lawful Calling or Business, whereby they may obtain Food and Raiment, with which they are content; Religion has bounded their Desires, and they greatly experience, that the Happiness of a Christian's Life does not consist in the Abundance of this World's Goods. I have the Authority of a Clergyman for what I am now going to mention, *viz.* "That all those who profess themselves Christians, should, in all their Actions, consequently in their Callings or Professions of Business, ask themselves this necessary Question," Can I do this Thing as a Christian? Or, is it consistent with the Principles and Precepts of my Christian Profession?" And if upon a serious and sincere Examination, we find that the Calling or Employment on which our Bread depends, be in any wise contrary to the Precepts of CHRIST, and the Example he left us to follow; if it be either directly or indirectly so,

ſo, I believe we are culpable if we don't leave off. For CHRIST tells us, if *our Right Hand offend us*, or cauſe us to act any Thing againſt his Laws, *we muſt cut it off*; we muſt quit whatſoever cauſes this Offence, how near, dear, and uſeful ſoever it be to us, as 'tis *better to enter into Life halt and maimed, than having two Hands to be caſt into Hell-fire.* I am not inſenſible, that what I have here offered will be thought hard Sayings by many; but for our Encouragement our bleſſed Lord aſſures us, *That any One who hath forſaken any temporal Advantage or Enjoyment, as Houſes, Lands, Father, Mother, Wife or Children, Brethren or Siſters, for his Sake and the Goſpel's, ſhall receive an Hundred-fold in this World, and in that to come Life everlaſting. For Godlineſs hath the Promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* We have not only an Hundred-fold of Peace in our Boſoms, *viz.* The Comforts of an upright Conſcience (a greater Bleſſing than any we have parted with) and ſpiritual Bread to eat, which the World knows not of; but our natural Bread is made ſure, and Water fails not; for the Lord oftentimes caſts away the Subſtance of the Wicked, yet he rarely ſuffers the Souls of the Righteous to famiſh. Agreeable to this the royal Prophet ſpeaks, *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I never ſeen the Righteous forſaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.* And again, he exhorts to "truſt in the Lord and do Good, and thou ſhalt dwell in the Land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed." And further, he calls to his Peo-

ple to fear the Lord, and believe in him; "Believe in him, and he will help thee, and order thy Way aright; fear and truſt in him, and your Reward ſhall not fail." He ſhall ſave them, becauſe they put their Truſt in him; for look at the Generations of old, and ſee, Did ever any truſt in the Lord, and was confounded? Or, did any abide in his Fear, and was forſaken? Or, whom did he ever deſpiſe that call'd upon his Name in Truth, Sincerity and Uprightneſs? But ſuppoſing that Chriſtians, as a Tryal of their Faith, may ſometimes be reduced to great outward Diſtreſs, which may poſſibly be permitted to extend to want of Bread, &c. *yet ſhall Famine, or Nakedneſs, or Perſecution, or Diſtreſs*, &c. *ſeparate us* (Chriſtians) *from the Love of God?* No ſurely; *Theſe* (compararively) *light Afflictions, which we ſuffer for a Moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. For tho' the ſpiritual Exerciſes, as well as temporal Troubles of the Righteous, may be many, yet the Lord delivereth out of them all. And then can we ſay upon the Banks of Deliverance, "We will love the Lord our Salvation, he having been our Strength and our Shield, and done great Things for us; therefore will we be thankful to his Name, and rejoice in his Power: For who among the Gods (or Idols many make to themſelves) is like unto our God! Let us therefore aſcribe Strength and Power to God; for his Name is glorious in Holineſs; he is fearful in Praiſes and a God that has indeed wrought Wonders for us." Thus

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are we excited to love God, who firſt loved us, and has called us to Glory, which we have beheld, as of the Glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth, of whom we have received Grace for Grace; and having thus ſeen his Glory, our Hearts are overcome with his Beauty, and we endeavour to return in our Meaſure Love for Love, and can now ſay in Truth and Sincerity, *Whom have we in Heaven but thee, and there is nothing that we deſire on Earth in compariſon of thee? Thou art indeed become the chief among ten Thouſand to our Souls.* Thus the truly Godly love God above all earthly Conſiderations, and in the higheſt Degree.

The Love of God, ſays a pious Writer, *is of ſo noble a Nature, that the Mediocrity, which in other Paſſions is an Excellence, is here an Imperfection. The Man, after God's own Heart, is not afraid to own to his Maker an Ardency of Love, which he expreſſes by the ſignificant Metaphor of Thirſt, My Soul is athirſt for God*, &c. *Other Paſſions like other Rivers, are beſt liked, when they flow within their wonted Banks; but the Love of God, as of the River* Nile, *the Overflowing makes it the more welcome.* The royal Prophet indeed diſcovers often a fervent Love to, and Deſire after, the Enjoyment of God's holy Preſence: So he no leſs eſteemed his Precepts; agreeable to what our bleſſed Lord ſaid in After-ages to his Diſciples, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments. I hate*, ſays David, *vain Thoughts, but thy Law do I love; for how ſweet are thy Words to my Taſte? Yea, ſweeter than Honey to my Mouth. I love thy Command-*

ments above Gold, yea, I esteem them above fine Gold. Thy Testimonies have I taken for an Heritage, for they are the rejoicing of my Heart. Thy Testimonies are my Delight, and my Counsellers. I delight to do thy Will, O my God! yea, thy Law is within my Heart, Psalm cxix. The Apostle *Paul* also delighted in the Law of God after the inner Man: And agreeably, the Righteous, in all Ages, decline not from the Commandments of his Lips, but esteem the Words of his Mouth more than necessary Food.

But let none imagine, that tho' it is our Duty to love God with all our Heart, Soul and Strength, above every Consideration, and with the greatest Ardency, that this Injunction clashes with, or hinders our exerting this Duty of Love in it's full Force in every natural and social Relation; as it is not the same Species of Love with which we love God, as that we extend to our Neighbour, Children, &c. For as God is an infinitely perfect Being, and happy in his own Perfections, we cannot add to his Happiness by wishing well to him; therefore we cannot love him with the Love of Benevolence or Beneficence, with which we love our Neighbour, &c. but with the Love of Desire, desiring to be with him, and to partake of his Fulness, agreeable to what the royal Prophet speaks, *One Thing have I desired, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House* (or Presence) *of the Lord forever; to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to worship in his Temple! A religious Soul*, says one, *may obey the Command of loving God intirely, tho'*

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ſhe allows her Affections other Objects, provided they be kept in a due Subordination, and from entering into Competition with that Love which ought to be appropriated to God. The Apoſtle *Peter* loved God above all earthly Conſiderations, when he refuſed to obey the High Prieſt, who charged him with the other Apoſtles, that they ſhould not teach in the Name of CHRIST: He anſwer'd, and ſaid, *We ought to obey God rather than Man.* Tho' in ſo doing they incurr'd the Diſpleaſure of Men, and were in Danger of loſing not only their Liberty, but even their Lives; nevertheleſs, ſay they, *we cannot but ſpeak the Things which we have ſeen and heard* (and for which Purpoſe we have been immediately commiſſion'd by our great Maſter himſelf) viz. *That by us Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins ſhould be preach'd in his Name among all Nations, beginning at* Jeruſalem. And the Apoſtle *Paul* expreſſes the greateſt, as well as the moſt fervent Love to God, when he thus queries, *Who* (or what Conſideration) *ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of God in CHRIST JESUS our Lord? Shall Tribulation, or Diſtreſs, or Perſecution, or Famine, or Peril, or Sword? No; in all theſe Things we are more than Conquerors thro' CHRIST, who hath loved us!* Therefore I am perſwaded, that *neither Life nor Death, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things preſent, nor Things to come, nor Heights* (of Proſperity) *nor Depths* (of Adverſity) *nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us* (Chriſtians) *from the Love of God.* And indeed thoſe *inferior Intereſts bear no ſort of Proportion to the ſuperior*

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Advantage of ſupreme and heavenly Enjoyments; they being of ſo precious a Nature, enough to engage us to court Heaven, at the Rate of renouncing for them all thoſe unmanly Senſualities, and trifling Vanities, for which inconſiderate Mortals are wont to forfeit the Intereſt their Saviour ſo dearly purchaſed for them. And as I have elſewhere ſaid, we may attribute all the ſordid Vices and growing Follies, which the Generality of People indulge themſelves in, to Inconſideration, as we don't enough examine and compare the fading Enjoyments of this Life, with the permanent Bleſſings of an happy Eternity; if we did, we ſhould ſoon diſcover the great Diſproportion, and willingly part with all ſinful and tranſitory Pleaſures. And when I have been reflecting that Vice and Luxury, in every Branch of it, abounds not only in *Great-Britain*, where I have ſo lately, and ſo frequently, lamented this epidemical Diſorder, among People, who nevertheleſs aſſume the Title of Chriſtians, and Diſciples of CHRIST, without rememb'ring, that all who take that ſacred Name upon them, muſt depart from all Iniquity. (CHRIST came to redeem us from all Sin, and to purify to himſelf *a peculiar People, zealous of good Works:*) I ſay, when I have obſerved that Vice, Softneſs, Effeminacy and Luxury, of moſt Kinds, has every where ſown its noxious Seeds, which flouriſh in moſt Climes or Countries, my Soul ſhrinks at the Thought of the Poſſibility not to ſay Probability and Danger (without timely Repentance and Amendment of Life) of careleſs, negligent and voluptuous Sinners, being precipitated from a

Life

Life of Eaſe, Security and Diverſion, to a State of endleſs Woe and Miſery! From the Converſation of wanton and gay Companions, to aſſociate with wicked and unhappy Spirits; whoſe melancholy Bemoanings, and bitter Cries and Complaints, will be far different from the melodious Strains of Muſick the Ears of the Voluptious have been accuſtom'd to: Therefore it greatly behoves Sinners to make a ſuitable Preparation for the trying Time of Death, leſt it ſurprize them at unawares; and the unhappy and dreadful Seaſon approach, wherein it will be ſaid to him that is filthy, *Be filthy ſtill.* Thus will Fearfulneſs ſeize the Hypocrite, and Sinners will be aſham'd of the Idols they once delighted in, and then will they caſt the whole Train of them to the Moles, and to the Batts.

But after all that can be ſaid againſt Pride or Vice, of what Nature ſoever, the ſtrong Man arm'd will keep Poſſeſſion of your Hearts, till you ſuffer a ſtronger than he to enter, and turn him out, and ſpoil his Goods. Thoſe Sins which do lett or hinder your coming to God, will lett, till you permit them to be removed. Every wild Olive-tree of Vice and Folly will grow and flouriſh, till you find it your Intereſt, and a Neceſſity of being ingrafted into the true Vine and Nature of CHRIST, and ſuffer him to lay the Ax of his Power to the Root of the old and corrupt Tree, and then will every Branch of Pride and Wickedneſs fall of courſe. Therefore, as One who has obtain'd Mercy, in having a Sight afforded me, to ſee the Things that make for my everlaſting Felicity, I wou'd recom-

recommend to you to consider of these Things. It was the great Loss and Disadvantage, as well as Folly of the Children of *Israel*, that they neglected the great Law of Consideration, which occasioned the Almighty thus to lament; *O that my People were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End!* But, further, as I have above occasionally mentioned Musick, which before I had only considered promiscuously, as an Attendant at Balls, &c. I shall now observe, that it was a Science I formerly greatly delighted in, and spent much Time, both in the Theory, as well as in the practical Part: But when Religion began to take place in my Heart, I found Musick stood in my Way, and I consider'd it only as an Amusement, which detain'd me from more solid and useful Thoughts and Reflections: In short, it became so burthensome to me, that I could not perform any of my airy Lessons, which had been usual, as well as pleasing to me: And on further Consideration it appears to me to be a merely sensual, and not an intellectual Pleasure (as some would fondly assert) therefore I quitted the Study, as well as Practice of it, for what I now esteem'd a more useful, profitable and rational Science, *viz.* The Study and Knowledge of my own Heart, which I have found worth all I knew of the other seven. But further, on perusing the sacred Writings, I do not remember to have read of one Christian Musician in all the New-Testament: And in reading the Old, it appears that the Prophet *Amos*, describing the Wantonness of the Children

dren of *Israel*, and enumerating the many Instances of their Luxury, he mentions Musick as a Mark of Levity and Wantonness; *They chant*, says he, *to the Sound of the Viol, and invent to themselves Instruments of Musick like* David; *but they are not grieved for the Affliction of* Joseph. And the Prophet *Isaiah* denounces a Woe against them; adding, *the Harp, and the Viol, the Tabret, and Pipe, and Wine, are in their Feasts; but they regard not the Work of the Lord, neither do they consider the Operation of his Hands*; not being moved with the Calamities of the suffering Part of Mankind, so long as they can enjoy Ease and Plenty.

And now hear what the Bishop of *Cambray* says on the Subject of Musick. *As for Musick, it is well known, that the Ancients believed nothing more pernicious to a well regulated State, than to suffer an effeminate Melody to be introduced into it: It enervates Men and renders their Souls soft and voluptuous: Languishing Strains are only pleasant, because the Soul gives itself up to the Charms of the Senses; and this*, adds he, *was one of their most important Policies.* Plato, in the like Manner, *severely rejects all the soft Airs of the* Asiatick *Musick; and with much greater Reason Christians who never ought to seek Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake, ought surely to have an Aversion for those poison'd Allurements.*

I have been the larger in my Objections on Diversions and Recreations, which, by most People, are consider'd as innocent Amusements; as they seem to be most hurtful and dangerous. Many Inconveniencies, as well as unlawful

Things, creep into the Hearts and Conduct of People, under the ſpecious Title of *Harmleſs Pleaſures*. *Poole*, in his Annotations on the Bible, tells us, when diſcourſing on the Lawfulneſs of earthly Enjoyments, *'Tis to be fear'd, more Souls miſs of Heaven and Happineſs, by indulging and allowing themſelves in Things deemed lawful, than by committing groſs and enormous Evils; theſe, many ſhrink at with Horror; but thoſe Things conſider'd lawful, which ſometimes becomes circumſtantially unlawful, and Pleaſures term'd innocent, are uſed and embraced without Fear or Caution; and with all their Train of miſchievous Conſequences.* For this Reaſon I have alſo dwelt the longer on Pride in Apparel; yet I am not inſenſible that it appears in many other Forms beſides that, or what I am going to mention, *viz.* That all true Chriſtians conſider it as an Evil, when it diſcovers itſelf in Houſes, Equipages, Furniture, or our Tables: As one who is endued with the Chriſtian Virtue of Humility, diſcovers it in every Action, or Thing, that he has the ordering and conducting of: Always keeping in Memory the Aſſertion of the Apoſtle *Paul*, *He that ſtrives for the Maſtery, or runs ſo as to obtain, is temperate in all Things.* And as he is temperate in the Uſe and Enjoyment of the Things of this Life, ſo is a true Chriſtian moderate in his Deſires and Purſuits after worldly Riches and Profits; he makes not Haſte to be rich; his greateſt Concern and principal Care, agreeable to our Lord's Direction and Advice, is, *Firſt to ſeek the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*; to lay up a

good

good Foundation againſt the Time to come; a permanent Inheritance, which fadeth not away: And as Heaven is the End of his Hope and Deſires, he is careful to lay up Treaſure there; uſing the periſhing Enjoyments of the Things of this Life, with as little Concern, and as much Indifference, as if he uſed them not, for this great and good Reaſon, "Becauſe the Faſhion of them paſſeth away!" On the contrary, how do we obſerve the ſordid Worldling, purſuing with Eagerneſs, Sollicitude and Warmth, the periſhing Riches of this Life? And, in direct Oppoſition to our Lord's Precept, they ſeek firſt, and principally, the Things of this World, which he exhorts us not to be greatly anxious or thoughtful about; but to ſuch as ſeek firſt his Kingdom, and the Righteouſneſs thereof, he aſſures us, *all theſe Things* (that are needful for our Support) *ſhall be added.* Nevertheleſs, when we come to reaſon with People of this Character, who ſo ready to confeſs, and aſſent to the following Truths? "That as we are in this uncertain and paſſing Situation, 'tis great Folly and Stupidity to be over anxious or immoderate in our Purſuits after Wealth, or to be ſo very careful as ſome are, in making large Proviſion for theſe mortal Bodies; laying up Goods for many Years; whereas we have no continuing City here; that 'tis appointed to all Men once to die, and we know not how ſoon we ſhall be ſummon'd to Judgment, to render an Account of the Deeds done in thoſe frail Bodies." Yet what has been Matter of Aſtoniſhment to me, is, that this very

Body, which People profeſs in Words to make ſo little Account of, when they reflect on the Shortneſs of it's Continuance here in this Life, engroſſes the whole Care: "What we ſhall eat, what we ſhall drink, and wherewith ſhall we be cloathed," appears to be the chief Concern of the Generality of Mankind? Not that I think the Body ſhould be excluded from a neceſſary and proper Proportion of our Care and Diligence; as it would be abſurd and irrational to ſuppoſe our Bodies can ſubſiſt without ſuitable Care and Proviſion: On the contrary, it is every Man's indiſpenſable Duty, to provide a Subſiſtence for himſelf and his Houſhold; ſuch who do not, are conſider'd by the Apoſtle worſe than *Infidels*; *having*, by this Neglect, *denied their Faith in CHRIST*; But then let it be a rational, moderate and Chriſtian Care; let the Things appertaining to this Life, have their juſt and proper Place in our Affections; and not rebelliouſly and unnaturally uſurp an Authority Almighty Wiſdom thought fit to inveſt his Creature Man with, at the Time when he preſented him with the Creation, and put it under his Subjection, ſaying, *Have thou Dominion over every living Thing*, &c. *and ſubdue the Earth.* Here was all ſublunary and earthly Objects placed under our Feet; that the Creatures were, by the Wiſdom and Order of God, placed in Subordination and Subjection to us; to be our Servants, not our Lords (that our Reaſon ſhould rule them, not they govern our Reaſon) which they immediately become, when we make an unlawful and improper Uſe of them; and

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which we certainly do, when we employ them to fulfil the ſinful Luſts and Vanities of the Fleſh. And further, is it not Matter of Wonder and Amazement, Compaſſion and Lamentation, to obſerve ſo little Proviſion made for, or Concern employ'd about the immortal Soul, which muſt abſolutely and certainly have an eternal Exiſtence, either in Bliſs or Miſery? And tho' many who pretend to Religion and Virtue, acknowledge that our Felicity conſiſts in rightly knowing, truly loving, and reverently ſerving the Supreme Being: And that Obedience, Submiſſion and Reſignation to his divine Will and holy Commands, is the higheſt Point of Wiſdom, and indiſpenſable Duty of all rational Minds; yet how ſmall the Proportion of thoſe who act agreeable to this Confeſſion, to thoſe, by far the greater Number, who inconſiderately and blindly follow the dark Imaginations of their own Wills and Affections? This Conſideration is indeed Subject of Mourning to thoſe whoſe Eyes and Underſtandings the Almighty has mercifully opened by the Hand of his divine Power, and aſſiſted by the Light of his Grace, to ſee their own Miſtakes; and has graciouſly afforded his holy Aid and Inſtruction, by which they were enabled to rectify them. Theſe, ſeeing the manifold Dangers all who are in a State of Sin and Forgetfulneſs of God are obnoxious to, are concerned to diſcover and point out the dangerous Rocks ſuch muſt inevitably fall on, if they continue to purſue the perilous Courſe of Sin and Folly; and to mark out, as far as they are enabled,

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the Way and Means by which they may eſcape the Pollution of, and Puniſhment due to Sin; and obtain Acceptance with the Almighty, *viz.* "Repentance towards God, Faith in JESUS CHRIST, and, by the Aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit, a conſtant and conſiſtent Walking in the Paths of Virtue and Holineſs:" For we are not ſo ignorant as not to know, that his Will concerning us, is our Sanctification: And that we may not be led aſtray, nor be deceived by the grand Adverſary of our Soul's Happineſs, our merciful and benign Creator, knowing our Weakneſs and Inability to perform any good Action, or to reſiſt the leaſt Temptation, by any Strength or Power of our own, without the Inſtruction, Aid and Aſſiſtance of his Almighty Arm, has provided us a Leader and Conductor, who is mighty to ſave, and able to deliver to the Uttermoſt, all who come to him with full Faith in his Power. We muſt, as the blind Man did (who came to CHRIST to have his Eyes open'd) believe that he is able to do the ſame great Work for us in a ſpiritual Senſe, which he perform'd for him in a natural; and alſo ſay, with the Leper, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean*; and as CHRIST's Office was alſo to open the Priſon Doors, and to let the Captives go free; All you who may be in cruel Bondage, held in Captivity by Sin and Satan, as it were, by Chains of groſs Darkneſs, if you are but willing to be releaſed from this Slavery, apply to CHRIST, who is able to bind the ſtrong Man armed, to ſpoil his Goods, and to expel him

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out of your Hearts: Are you willing to be free? CHRIST our Lord proclaims a *Year of Jubilee*, wherein he is ready and willing to set you free on easy Terms, *viz.* " Love and Obedience to his Will, whose Service is perfect Freedom; for if CHRIST make you free, then shall you be free indeed; when the Law of the Spirit of Life in CHRIST JESUS hath made you free from the Law of Sin and Death, and brought you into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God; glorious Priviledge indeed! Behold the stupendous Love of the Father, and the Dignity he bestows upon " those that are " led by his Spirit, that they shall be called " the Sons of God! and if Sons, then Heirs, " Joint Heirs with CHRIST, *Rom.* viii. 14. 17. of the Kingdom he hath promised to them that love and obey him. And permit me to assure you, from my own happy Experience; (which I would always mention with Humility and Reverence, never, I hope, forgetting, that what I am, I am *by the Grace of God*) That " whosoever looketh into this perfect Law of " Liberty, and continueth therein, this Man " shall be blessed in his Deed, *Isa.* i. 25. For the Effect of Obedience to the royal Law of God, is Quietness and Assurance forever; which will afford us a well-grounded Hope of Acceptance with the Almighty, agreeable to the Apostle; ' Beloved, if our Hearts condemn ' us not, then have we Confidence towards God, 1 *John* iii. 21. And the Reason he assigns is ' Because we keep his Commandments; ' and this is his Commandment, That we should

' believe

'believe on the Name or Power of his Son 'CHRIST JESUS, ver. 23." And you know that he was manifeſted to take away our Sins. But if any one ask, How ſhall I apply to CHRIST, or where ſhall I go to meet with Him; ſince ſome ſay, Lo, here is CHRIST; and others, Lo, he is there? Hear now where the Apoſtle *Paul* directs all ſuch Enquirers; 'Say not in thine 'Heart, who ſhall aſcend into Heaven? that 'is, to bring CHRIST down from above: Or 'who ſhall deſcend into the Deep? that is, to 'bring CHRIST again from the Dead (for the 'Righteouſneſs, which is of Faith, ſpeaketh on 'this wiſe) The Word is nigh thee, even in 'thy Mouth, and in thine Heart, that is the 'Word of Faith which we preach, *Rom.* x. 6, '7, 8.' And this is the Law and new Covenant the Prophet *Jeremiah* foretold God would make with his People, which in theſe latter Days, or Goſpel Diſpenſation, our great Legiſlator puts into the Hearts of Mankind, and writes in the moſt ſecret Receſſes of our Conſciences; inſtructing us more immediately in our Duty, and ſaying to the Unrighteous and Diſobedient, 'This is the Way, not that which 'thou art walking in, of Sin and Folly; but 'this is the Way, the Way of Righteouſneſs, 'Holineſs, and Obedience to all God's Com-'mands; for the Commandment is a Lamp, and 'the Law is Light; and the Reproofs of In-'ſtructions in the Way to Life, *Prov.* vi. 23.' In this Way and Light the Righteous are careful to walk; 'the Law of his God being 'in his Heart (if ſtrictly adhered to)

'none

' none of his Steps shall slide, *Psalm* xxxvii. 31. To the Truth and Extention of this Light, or Grace of CHRIST's Holy Spirit, in our Hearts, ' this more sure Word of Prophecy,' the Apostle *Paul* bears ample Testimony, as I have elsewhere noted, in these Words; " The Grace of God, that brings Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us that denying Ungodliness, and the World's Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World, *Titus* ii. 11, 12. With this Testimony of the Light the Liturgy of the *Church of England* concurs. **God, who at this Time didst teach the Hearts of thy faithful People, by sending to them the Light of thy Holy Spirit; grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right Judgment in all Things; and evermore to rejoice in his holy Comfort.* And in the Litany; † *May it please thee to endue us with the Grace of the Holy Spirit: Let us beseech God to grant us true Repentance, and his Holy Spirit, that those Things may please him that we do at present, and that the rest of our Lives may be pure and holy.* ***Forasmuch, O God, as without thee we are not able to please thee, grant that thy Holy Spirit may, in all Things, rule our Hearts; and because of the Weakness of our mortal Nature, we can do no good Thing without thee, grant us the Help of thy Grace, that, in keeping thy Commandments, we may please thee, both in Will and in Deed.*

Therefore as the †† Dicourses and Prayers of

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* *Col. Whit. Sun.* † *Absolution.* ** *Col.* 19 *Sund. Trin.*

†† Archbishop *Tillotson's* Sermons.

others abound with Teſtimonies to the Neceſſity of Chriſtians being led and guided, and influenced by the Spirit or Grace of God; which we ſometimes expreſs by the Scripture and ſignificant Metaphor, of *Light*. Why ſhould this Doctrine, or theſe Terms, be conſidered and ridiculed as Abſurdities in our Words or Writings; ſince we underſtand and uſe them in the ſame Senſe and Acceptation, and pray for the Illumination and Aid of the Holy Spirit, for the ſame good Purpoſe, *viz. To give us a right Judgment in all Things.* And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Underſtanding. *We know that he is come by the Gift of his Holy Spirit ſent into our Hearts; which ſhews us all that we do, or ever have done --- This is he of a Truth, whom the Prophets and primitive Chriſtians bore Teſtimony to; By his Heart-ſearching Power, we know him; nor can we miſtake him for another: And as he thus knows the Secrets of all Hearts, and will judge them with righteous Judgment, in the Day God has appointed for it; the only Way for us to be happy here, as well as hereafter, is to obey the Dictates of this moſt holy Gift; and refrain from every Thing it reproves for; and we, as well as thoſe in the Apoſtle's Time, ſhall feel the Peace of God to fill our Hearts and Minds. This Holy Gift therefore is the Power of Godlineſs, which the Apoſtle foreſaw ſome would deny, tho' they retain'd the Form of it: To deny therefore this Influence, is to deny one of the eſſential Benefits of CHRIST's Death and Mediation; for he leading Captivity Captive, that is, the*

Power

Power of Hell, Death and the Grave, aſcended up on high, and mediated and obtained theſe divine Gifts for Men; and as the Grave could not hold Captive the Body of this holy One, ſo neither can the Heaven of Heavens contain or limit his ſpiritual Influence; by which his Miniſters and Servants receive Power, Knowledge and Wiſdom. Men may, with as good a Grace, go about to deny the Influence of the Sun by its Light and Heat, as that of God upon Man. But poor, proud, finite Man, becauſe he cannot comprehend the Mode and Manner of it, would as preſumptuouſly as injuriouſly (to himſelf) deny it. Whereas he can't ſo much as underſtand or comprehend the Manner of the natural Sun's emitting its Rays of Light and Heat, tho' he daily ſees and feels the Neceſſity and Benefit of them: How much more ſtupenduouſly ſublime, and incomprehenſible is the Diffuſion of the Holy Spirit! 'tis ſufficient for us finite Creatures, to feel the Effects of it, as we do of the Sun, without comprehending the Manner of its Emanation. As the powerful Operation and Motions of God's Spirit, quickening the Heart towards God, are compared to the blowing of the Wind; for as it is by the Wind, Man perceives the Effect of it, that there is ſuch a Thing, and that it does blow; yet his Power cannot reſtrain it; neither can his Reaſon reach to know, whence it riſes, or how far it comes, or how far it reaches. However, it is fit to be obſerved, that God does not act by a coercive or compulſive Power; but as he has given Men ſpiritual Gifts, ſo he has given them ſpiritual Faculties to uſe them, as well as natural

Ones: But if Men will not hear, the Conſequence as naturally follows, as in any other Caſe, God remaining invariably the ſame, and without the leaſt Shadow of turning. I ſhall now produce another Teſtimony to the Truth of the Operation of God's Spirit in Man, which the Archbiſhop of *Cambray* gives us in the following Words; *By Scripture 'tis certain that the Spirit of God dwells in us; that it acts there, that it prays there continually, that it groans there, deſires there; that it asketh for us, what we know not how to ask for ourſelves; that it excites us, animates us, ſpeaks to us in Silence, ſuggeſts all Truth to us, and unites us to itſelf, that we become one Spirit with God: This is what Scripture teacheth; this is what the Doctors who are fartheſt off of inward Life, cannot but acknowledge: And yet, notwithſtanding their Principles, we always ſee by their Practice, that they ſuppoſe the outward written Law, or, at moſt, a Light drawn from Scripture and Reaſon, to be what enlightens us inwardly; and that it is not our Reaſon afterwards which acts of itſelf by that Inſtruction. Theſe Men ſet not enough by the inward Teacher, the Holy Spirit, who does all in us; he is the Soul of our Souls; we cannot frame a Thought, or create a Deſire, but through him. Alas! how great is our Blindneſs! We make account as if we were by ourſelves in this inward Sanctuary; but, on the contrary, God is there more nearly than we ourſelves are. Perhaps you will ſay to me, What then, are we all inſpired? Yes, without Doubt; but not as the Prophets and Apoſtles were. Without the actual Inſpiration of the Spirit of Grace,*

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we can neither believe, will, nor do any Good. We are therefore always inſpired; but we ſtifle this Inſpiration continually. God ceaſes not to ſpeak; but the Noiſe and Hurry of Things without, and our Paſſions within, deafen us, and hinder us from hearing Him. We muſt ſilence every Creature, and ourſelves too, to hear in a profound Stillneſs of Soul, the inexpreſſible Voice of Chriſt, the Bridegroom of our Souls. We muſt liſten diligently; for 'tis a very ſtill and ſoft Voice, which is not to be heard, but by ſuch as hearken to nothing elſe. O how ſeldom is the Soul ſilent enough to let God ſpeak! The leaſt whiſper of our vain Deſires, or of Self-love, attentive on Self, confounds all the Words of the Spirit of God. We hear plainly what he ſpeaks, and that he asks for ſomething; but we don't perceive what it is; and very often we are contented not to underſtand it. The leaſt Reſerve, the leaſt Regard for Self, the leaſt Fear of underſtanding too plainly, that God asks for more than we care to give Him, diſturbs this inward Voice. Shall we wonder then that ſo many, and even pious Perſons, but full of amuſing Thoughts, vain Deſires, worldly Wiſdom, and Confidence in their own Virtues, can't hear it; but take this inward Voice to be a Chimera of Fanaticks! Alas, what do they mean by ſuch ſcornful Language? To what Purpoſe would the outward Expreſſions of Teachers be, and even of the Scriptures themſelves, if it were not for the inward Voice of the Holy Spirit; which gives the other all its Efficacy. The outward Words of the Goſpel itſelf, without this living, efficacious Word within, would be but an empty Sound. 'Tis

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the Letter that killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life. O eternal and All-powerful Word of the Father! 'tis thou who ſpeakeſt in the very Bottom of our Souls. The Words that proceeded out of the Mouth of our Saviour, when upon Earth, had not been productive of ſo much Virtue, and ſo great Fruits, but becauſe they were animated by this Word of Life, which is the Word himſelf. This made Peter *ſay,* Lord, to whom ſhall we go? Thou haſt the Words of eternal Life! *Therefore it is not the exterior Law or Rule of the Goſpel, which God lets us ſee by the Light of Reaſon and Scripture; 'tis his Spirit that ſpeaks, that teaches, that operates in, and animates us; ſo 'tis the Spirit that worketh in us, both to will and to do what is good; as 'tis our Soul that animates our Body, and regulates its Motions: 'Tis certain therefore that we are all inſpir'd continually; that we live not the Life of Grace, but in Proportion as we partake of this inward Inſpiration. Theſe Poſitions and Principles being laid, it muſt be acknowledged, that God ſpeaks continually in us: He ſpeaks in harden'd and impenitent Sinners; but they being ſtunn'd, as it were, by the Noiſe of the World, and their Paſſions, cannot hear his Voice; 'tis to them a Tale or Fiction: He ſpeaks in penitent Sinners, they feel a Remorſe of Conſcience, and that Remorſe is the Voice of God, which reproaches them inwardly for their Sins: When theſe Sinners are effectually reached and ſmitten, they find no Difficulty in underſtanding this ſecret Voice; for 'tis that which ſmites them ſo ſharply; 'tis in them the* Two-edged Sword *St.* Paul *ſpeaks of,* which divides aſunder Soul

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and Spirit. *God makes himself to be felt, tasted, and obeyed: They hear this soft Voice, which gently smites them in the very Secret of their Heart, and the Heart is tendered and broken; and that is true Contrition: God speaks in enlightened and learned Persons, whose Lives are to Appearance, exact and regular; but commonly these Persons being full of themselves, hearken too much to themselves, to hear God; they reason upon every Thing, and do all by Rules and Principles of human Wisdom and Prudence; which would be much better done thro' Simplicity, and a Docility to the Teaching of God's Spirit: Such as these appear to have more Goodness than others; and they have, in a good Degree; but then it is a mixed Goodness; they are great and big in themselves, and value themselves in Proportion to their Capacity and Reason; they are always sway'd by their own Counsel, and strong in their own Eyes and Opinion. O my God, I thank thee with* JESUS CHRIST, *that thou hidest these Secrets from the Wise and Prudent in their own Eyes, but revealest them with Pleasure to weak and humble Souls! 'Tis only Children thou art familiar with; Children in Malice, and every other Vice; but behavest towards others in their own Way: They will have Knowledge, and other splendid Virtues; thou givest them shining Parts, and makest them a sort of Heroes; but this is not the best Portion; there is some thing more hidden for thy dear Children; they lean, as* John *the beloved Disciple did, upon thy Bosom.* If these Arguments, drawn from a sensible Experience and

and Feeling of God's Operation in the Soul, convince not the Reader; if he be not one of those who think to have eternal Life by the Scriptures, yet will not come to CHRIST, that they may have Life; he would do well to examine and see, if he is not in the State the Author himself once was in; seeking for God without, and never think to find him within. *I tried*, says he, *by collecting in my Mind all the wonderful Works of Nature, to frame an Idea of thy Grandeur; I sought thee among thy Creatures, and did not think of finding Thee in my own Heart; where thou art never absent. Consider these Things, my Soul, and shut the Door of thy sensual Desires, that thou mayst hear what God the Lord speaks; and with the Prophet* Samuel *say*, Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth. *Let not* Moses, *nor any of the Prophets, speak; but do Thou rather speak, O Lord God, the Inspirer and Enlightener of all the Prophets! for Thou, alone, without them, canst perfectly instruct me; but they, without Thee, can profit nothing. They sound forth Words, but cannot give Spirit; they speak well, but if Thou be silent, they inflame not the Heart; they teach the Letter, but Thou openest the Sense; they bring forth Mysteries, but Thou unlockest the Meaning of them; they declare Thy Commandments, Thou helpest us to fulfil them; they shew the Way, Thou givest Strength to walk in it; they act outwardly upon us, but Thou enlightens and instructs the Heart; they water, but Thou givest the Increase; they strike the Ear with Words, Thou givest Understanding to the Heart.*

Thus,

Thus, my dear Fellow-mortals, I would hope by this Time you are all ſenſible that you have a Portion of Grace or Light, which has manifeſted Sin and Folly to you ſometimes in the Cool of the Day, when you have been a little ſequeſter'd from your Diverſions; liſten then, I beſeech you, to its Voice; it will ſpeak, as I ſaid before, as never Man did; it will tell you all you have done, and continue to reprove when you do amiſs. This is the Voice of that Prophet which *Moſes* told the Children of *Iſrael* would be raiſed up amongſt them; 'A 'Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up 'unto you, of your Brethren like unto me, 'him ſhall you hear in all Things. And who-'ſoever will not hear this Prophet, he ſhall be 'cut off from among the People,' *Acts* iii. 22. Hearken, I beſeech you, to his Voice; receive him in his ſpiritual Appearance; kiſs the Son while he offers his Grace, leſt he be angry, and cut you off in the great Sin of Unbelief, in his Power to cleanſe you from all Unrighteouſneſs.

I don't purpoſe to particularize or conſider ſingly every Sin the corrupt Nature of Man is liable to; yet as there have ſeveral Iniquities occurred to me which I have noticed, ſo I ſhall, as it now preſents to my Underſtanding, make a brief Obſervation on that black and cruel One, of Detraction, eſpecially as I have often obſerved how many fall into this Miſchief inconſiderately, without thinking it of ſo cruel and evil a Nature as it really is, this noxious Weed being the Product of moſt Countries, I can't forbear putting you in Remembrance how

many able Pens have been employed, to eradicate it, by Reasons and Arguments, sufficient abundantly to convince us of its hurtful Nature, and give us a just Abhorrence of it; as an Injury done to our Neighbour seldom fails to recoil upon our selves at one Time or other; for he that diggeth a Pit shall fall into it, and he that rolleth a Stone, it shall return upon him. And as I have noted, this Vice has been exposed to the World long ago, in its hideous Forms and cruel Consequences, I don't here presume to think myself capable of painting it in more gloomy and disagreeable Shapes than others have done. What I would remark is, That it is to be feared many don't peruse carefully the Scriptures, and other Books, on the Subject of Moral, as well as Christian Virtues; or at least do not sufficiently consider them; for did we but rightly and justly reflect on this Precept of CHRIST's, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*, One would think it might be sufficient to prevent the Mouth of Envy, Malice, Infamy and Detraction, from ever being open'd; and were there but Room for this Reflection in any Interval of such Conversation, how wou'd it silence all Uncharitableness! CHRIST mentions our *Love to God* in the first Place, and in the superlative Degree; and in the next, *Love* (or Charity) *to our Neighbour*, *as the two* (most material) *Commandments* (or Points) *on which depends the Law and the Prophets.* And he has left us this Injunction, which is stiled *the golden Rule*, and ought to be an inviolable One, " Whatsoever ye would

that

that Men ſhould do unto you, do you even the ſame to them." And on another Occaſion he adds, "A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." And the Apoſtle *Paul* recommends to the *Romans* the accompliſhing this Commandment in theſe Words "Owe no Man any Thing, but to love one another; Love worketh no Ill to his Neighbour; therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law." And after enumerating the Laws of the ſecond Table, he ſubjoins, "If there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf." But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another." The Apoſtle *James* tells the Believers, if they fulfill'd the royal Law according to the Scripture, "Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf, ye do well." And the Apoſtle *Paul*, giving the *Romans* and *Galatians* a Catalogue of the Fruits or Sins of the Fleſh, among others he mentions "Backbiting, Envy, Whiſpering, Malice, Emulation, &c." And he exhorts the *Epheſians* to put away "all Bitterneſs, Wrath, Clamour and Evil-ſpeaking, with all Malice; and be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God for CHRIST's Sake hath forgiven you." And the Apoſtle *Peter*, dehorting Chriſtians from the Breach of Charity, ſpeaks after this Manner; "Wherefore laying aſide all Malice, Guile, Hypocriſy, Envy, and all Evil-ſpeaking, by which you will become as new born Babes (innocent and pure) fitted to recive (or deſire) the ſincere Milk

of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." And next let us obſerve, how that St. *Paul* exalts this Love to God, and Charity (or Love) to our Neighbour, above all other Gifts and Virtues: "Tho' I ſpeak with the Tongue of Men or Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal. Tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries and Knowledge; tho' I have Faith, ſo as to remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing." And tho' I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and tho' I give my Body to be burned and have not Charity (if I don't give and ſuffer from this Principal of Love to God and my Neighbour) it profiteth me nothing. Charity or Love ſuffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not (the Happineſs of another) Charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own (Honour or Reputation) is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no Evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth, or (when any act agreeable to the Goſpel of CHRIST) beareth all Things, believeth all Things, (all the Good it hears, or can have any charitable Grounds to think of others) hopeth all Things (that if our Neighbour is bad he may mend) endureth all Things (patiently) as all Things work together for Good to them that love God. This Charity never faileth; but whether there be Prophecies they ſhall fail; whether there be Tongues they ſhall ceaſe, whether there be Knowledge it ſhall vaniſh away. And now abideth Faith,

Hope

Hope and Charity, but the greateſt of theſe is Charity," as it will continue when Faith ſhall end in Viſion, and Hope in Enjoyment. And now permit me to recommend to you a ſerious Peruſal of theſe, as well as other Paſſages of the Holy Records, which were written for our Learning and Inſtruction: And amongſt many which I might mention, who has wrote againſt the Sin of Detraction, there is one in the Collection called *The Lady's Library*, worth peruſing, as the Arguments ſeem founded on Chriſtian Principles and Doctrines, and the Reaſoning obvious and convincing. But ſuffer me now, without Offence, to mention a Thought I have often had, when I have been reflecting on this Fault in both Sexes. As I endeavour to cheriſh a more charitable Opinion of Mankind, than to think any Perſon can delight in Evil ſimply as Evil; and I would fain hope few are of ſo cruel a Diſpoſition, as to receive a Pleaſure in hearing the Errors and Miſcarriages of their Neighbours related. And if any be guilty of the ſame Fault, or any other, our Brother may be charged with, the Company of others in Evil, will by no Means extenuate our Crime, or render ſuch leſs culpable in the Sight of God, or leſs odious to good Men: But, on the contrary (if I may be allow'd the Expreſſion) the Confederacy againſt Heaven is the more ſtrengthen'd by the Number of its Enemies; yet tho' they join Hand in Hand, they ſhall not go unpuniſhed: However, I have put the Conduct of People of this Character on a more charitable and favourable Bottom; for I

have conſider'd, that theſe ſort of Converſations, or rather Conſpiracies, againſt our Neighbour's Fame, proceed from a Defect of that ſolid Nouriſhment the Author I have before cited ſeems to recommend. And I have ſometimes thought, that it is our Ignorance of other Matters, and better Subjects, which occaſions our Neighbour's Conduct to be ſo frequently the Topick of our Converſations; but I wou'd not be here underſtood to call in queſtion the Capacities of either Sex, and wou'd only deſire the Liberty of giving a Caution againſt the Miſapplication of your Talent or Talents. This appears to me to be the Fault, People's employing their Faculties ſo much, not only on vain, and trifling Subjects, but frequently on pernicious and hurtful Things, ſo that they have no Room nor Leiſure to attend to more uſeful and important Subjects; and as I have ſaid, that tho' we may not be chargeable with the ſame Fault our Neighbour may be guilty of, yet the Apoſtle *Paul* tells us, "All Mankind have ſinned, and fallen ſhort of the Favour of God," and therefore all who have not yet ſincerely repented and amended their Ways, have need of Repentance and Forgiveneſs. But if any commit an Evil, how are Chriſtians to act in ſuch a Circumſtance? Are we to expoſe, blacken and defame our Brother, or to rejoice in his Miſcarriage? No ſurely; the Goſpel of CHRIST and his Miniſters teach other Things.

"Brethren, if any be overtaken with a Fault, you that are ſpiritual (endeavour to) reſtore him;" How? "In the Spirit of Meekneſs,

neſs, conſidering, leaſt thou thyſelf be alſo tempted," let his Miſcarriage excite our Compaſſion towards him, and Caution towards ourſelves; and bear ye one another's Burthen's, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt, "Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf;" and whenever we call in Queſtion our Neighbour's Conduct, let us remember we are firſt to be ſpiritual ourſelves, walking in all God's Commandments blameleſs: And agreeable to the Doctrines and Principles of Chriſt, let us firſt pull the Beam out of our own Eye, and then ſhall we ſee clearly to take the Mote from our Brother's. And when we are converted then ſhall we be fitted to ſtrengthen our Brethren: Thus the royal Pſalmiſt petitions the Almighty, "Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right Spirit within me: Then will I teach Tranſgreſſors thy ways, and Sinners ſhall be converted to Thee."

I ſhall now mention another particular Evil, not only as I find it greatly blam'd by others, but as it has often been Subject of Concern to me when I have obſerv'd this unnatural Conduct, which relates only to the Female Part of the World, ſo juſtly chargeable on them: But which I would charitably hope they have not yet many of them ſeen, or at leaſt reflected on the great Miſchief it produces, both to themſelves, and their Offspring. The Fault I mean, is Neglect of Duty, and natural Obligation to our helpleſs Infants, which is ſo obvious at their firſt Appearance in Life, when we deny them that Nouriſhment Nature has provided

for

for them, and by framing ſome inſignificant Excuſe, forſake and leave them to others. This inhumane Treatment of our tender little Ones, I can't help thinking has its Foundation in Pride. Natural Affection to our Offspring ſeems blended with our very Conſtitution; and it appears to me we muſt uſe uncommon Violence to ſeparate it from our Make. But behold the Effects of Pride! what Miſchief is there that it is not productive of! Even a few Weeks after our tender Babe beholds the Light, leſt it ſhould occaſion us ſome extraordinary Trouble and Care, or prevent ſome little Delicacy in our Shape or Dreſs, or detain us from making unedifying and impertinent Viſits, &c. we conſign the poor Innocent into the Hands of a Stranger, to be foſter'd by Women, oftentimes, of ſavage Tempers, and vile Affections, which ſome are of Opinion the Infant imbibes with its Milk; tho' I can't conceive this, as I apprehend we are not Sinners by Conſtitution, but Corruption. However, it is manifeſt, and often happens, that the Child imbibes an unwholeſome Conſtitution from its Nurſe: And, 'tis the Opinion of ſome, that the Death of many an Infant (in other Places at leaſt) may be chargeable on their Parents, on this Score; as alſo when the Nurſe proves careleſs and negligent in her Office; and that this has been frequently the Caſe, few will deny: For how can we reaſonably expect that a Stranger ſhou'd take that due and tender Care, and faithfully diſcharge ſo troubleſome an Office, which a Parent, ſuppos'd to have a natural Engagement for her

Infant,

Infant, declines and refuſes, for this very Reaſon to take upon her. I, who am a Parent, have been fill'd with Aſtoniſhment at the Parent, and Compaſſion towards the Child, when I have beheld the delicate Mother ſit unconcern'd and unrelenting, at the Time her little Offspring has been uttering its tender Complaints, and, as it were, petitioning the obdurate Parent with its little eloquence of Tears for its own Support, provided by Nature, without her Care or Trouble. Dr. *Whitby*, in ſome Obſervations on Things natural, to explain and illuſtrate his Subject, has theſe Words; 'Tis natural, *ſays he*, for a Woman to ſuckle her Infant, becauſe Nature has furniſh'd her with proper and ſuitable Means of Nouriſhment for that Purpoſe.' But had that Author lived till this Day, he had poſſibly been told Nature had changed her Order, and generally with-held and deny'd the common Means. It has often been Subject of Reflection to me, when I have obſerved that Women pretend they are ſo univerſally diſabled, that they are incapable of taking upon them this tender Office, and diſcharging the natural Obligation of Suckling their Children. The general Plea is, want of Milk, or Tenderneſs of Conſtitution, which renders them unfit to take upon them ſo troubleſome an Office: But as often as I have obſerved, examin'd, and traced ſuch Pretences and Excuſes for this Cruelty, I have found (except in ſome few Inſtances) they abſolutely center in Pride and Self-love. But I only propoſe by this ſhort remark, to remind ſome,

and inform others, that this unnatural Conduct has been juſtly condemn'd by Arch-biſhop *Tillotſon*, to whoſe Diſcourſes, on the Education of Children, I would refer you. However, he (as well as others) does not propoſe Impoſſibilities to any; on the contrary, he goes far in admitting real and reaſonable Pleas and Excuſes; but where none of theſe appear, he is of Opinion, 'tis every Woman's indiſpenſible Obligation to nouriſh her Infant at her own Breaſt. His Arguments are bro't from Nature, Scripture and Reaſon; and I heartily wiſh every Parent, in this Circumſtance, and of this Character, may peruſe them impartially and candidly; and that they may have the good Effect of reſtoring that natural Affection and Tenderneſs, in the Female Part of the World, which has been ſo long loſt. And before I conclude this Obſervation, I ſhall tranſcribe a Paſſage from a Pamphlet lately printed in *London*, entitled, *Britain's Remembrancer*; wherein the Author (whom I have heard is a Nobleman) propoſes a Method for improving the preſent unhappy Situation of the Nation and Kingdom of *Great-Britain*; and ſhews that the Calamities they are involved in, are the Effects of the Vices and Irreligion which prevail among the Inhabitants; againſt whom he brings a general Charge: And then in a particular Addreſs to the Women, he takes the Liberty of telling them, That no ſmall Share of the national Guilt is chargeable on their Account, as, ſays he, "You have given up yourſelves to Plea-
"ſures, Theatrical and Muſical Entertainments,

"to

" to the neglect not only of all that is ſpiri-
" tual and ſacred, but alſo of thoſe Domeſtick
" Cares which are your proper Province. The
" unavoidable Effect of a conſtant Purſuit of
" theſe publick Diverſions, muſt be intirely to
" pervert your Minds from what is the only
" natural Sphere of Womankind, and what
" they were originally intended for, by the
" Ordination of Heaven; who form'd you for
" the plain and homely, but neceſſary and en-
" dearing Characters, of a Wife and a Mother;
" and that all the various Ornaments of Pride,
" which fill a Woman's fantaſtick Brain, and
" disfigure the native Beauties of her Perſon;
" and all the giddy Hours ſhe paſſes in a
" Round of guilty Follies, falſely called Plea-
" ſure and Diverſion, tend to make her more
" unfit for what Nature deſign'd her. And
" whenever you aim at any thing elſe, than to
" be dutiful Daughters, loving Wives, tender
" Mothers, prudent Miſtreſſes of Families,
" faithful Friends, and pious Chriſtians, you
" aim at ſomething quite out of Nature, and
" beſide the Intention of Heaven in making
" you rational Creatures. Will *Vauxhall* im-
" prove you in Oeconomy and Frugality?
" Or *Ranelagh's* in the domeſtick Arts that
" make Families happy? Will the bombaſtick
" Rant of the Play-houſe furniſh you with
" Maxims of Prudence? Or its obſcene Ribal-
" dry ſtore your Minds with the Graces of
" Modeſty and Virtue? How long muſt you
" die away to the ſoft Strains of Muſick, or
" ſtudy theatrical Excellencies of Stage-

" heroes, before you will be the fitter Com-
" panions for Men of Senſe? How long muſt
" you practice curling the Hair, fluttering your
" Fans, and overloading your Perſons with
" falſe Ornaments, before your Converſation
" will be ever new, and ever entertaining to a
" Husband of Knowledge and Worth." This, and much more to the ſame Effect, ſays that noble Author, to whom I refer you; and ſhall only add what he propoſes in general as the beſt Expedient to improve the preſent Juncture of Affairs, *viz.* " That every Indi-
" vidual endeavour to reform One."

I have ſometimes had a Concern on my Mind to recommend to your Conſideration, the Juſtice and Duty you owe to your Children in another Reſpect beſide that I have mentioned, *viz.* The Obligation every Parent is under to manifeſt an eſpecial Regard for the future Happineſs of the Souls of their Children, by a religious Care in their Education: But I have been diſcouraged from offering my Sentiments on this Subject, when I conſider the little Care and Regard too many Parents have for their own Souls, whoſe future Well-being appears to be much diſregarded by many, tho' profeſſing Chriſtianity.

I don't purpoſe to ſay much on this Subject; yet think proper to offer a few things to your Conſideration, which tho' they may perhaps appear trifling to ſome at firſt Sight, yet I have ſometimes thought them of greater Conſequence, than I apprehend many others do. That Errors in the firſt Principles of Education (as well as

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in other Cases) are dangerous and pernicious, is a received Maxim; for if we set out with wrong Means to obtain a desired End; we have not only lost our Time, but with great Difficulty and Labour must unlearn our first Rules and Lessons. Upon reflecting on the Appearances of Anger and Resentment, which we find so early and so often glow in the little tender Breasts of Infants, and the early Propensities we observe in them to Pride, and a Fondness for Trifles; it has appeared to me, they may be often attributed to the ill Example of Parents, &c. and Errors in their Management from their Infancy, as young Children we know commonly imitate and act from the Example of their Parents, or those concern'd in the Care and Education of them. To say little of the superfluous Ornaments of Lace, Lace-work, and Ribbands, which the Infant is adorn'd with, as soon as it comes into the World, as well to please and gratify the Mother's and Nurse's Vanity, as that it may be admir'd by the formal and ceremonious Visitors; as soon as the Infant is capable of the least Notice, it is immediately presented with a Number of foolish Toys, which, tho' some, suitably chosen, may be proper to give them an Idea of natural Things, yet I have thought there are many Trifles presented and recommended to them as Things of Value and Worth, which lead them afterwards to entertain a Fondness for Vanities and Toys, that are more expensive and hurtful. By this Time, some little Dawning of Reason begins to appear in the Child, Care is taken to inculcate

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the Principles of Anger and Malice, Resentment and Revenge, as the Child is instructed to receive every little Contradiction, as an Injury or Affront, which he is to revenge, by giving the Nurse the Blow to execute on the Offender. Next comes in Course, to amuse the Child, a String of idle absurd Sonnets and Ballads, which, as soon as its lisping Tongue is able to form Words, it is taught to repeat. The next Instruction is, in a Catalogue of vain, amusing Stories, a Relation of Fairy Tales, Histories of Giants, Tom Thumbs, and such like Stuff, are the young and tender Brains and Capacities of Infants stor'd with; as proper Rudiments to fit them for, and introduce more ingenious Lies and Romances. The next Thing Children are early instructed in, is Rule and Authority, by teaching, and allowing them a Superiority over Servants. A Servant tho' never so judicious and capable of knowing what is fit and convenient for a Child, is nevertheless restrained by many Parents from keeping Children in Subjection and Order, or crossing and disappointing their Will in any Circumstance; this manifestly teaches the Child a Lesson of Self-will, which many never unlearn all their Lives after. The next Cruelty we are guilty of to our Children, is Flattery (at the same Time by Example or Precept teaching them many little and mean Artifices and equivocal Turns, unworthy a rational and generous, to say nothing of a Christian Mind) this is commonly practised both by Parents and Servants, by whom Children are instructed, when adorn'd with all the

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Pomp and Vanity within the Parent's Reach, to ſet an high Value and Eſtimation on themſelves, on the Score of their fine Clothes, *&c.* or the Perfections of their Bodies, and at the ſame time they are taught to deſpiſe others, by perſwading them they are both finer and handſomer than ſome others. And now to finiſh and compleat a modern Education, it requires the following Accompliſhments, *viz.* To be expert in Dreſs and Dancing, Ombre or Gaming in general, to be able to make judicious Remarks on Opera Airs, and ſtage Plays, and to repeat much of the Ribaldry and Prophanity they learn from thence, and reading Romances and other pernicious Books. Add to all this the Art of Viſiting, where after thoſe preſent are much flatter'd and complimented; the Abſent, on the contrary, are as ungenerouſly dealt with, and ſeverely handled. But with reſpect to the religious Education of Children, we do not find many Parents employ much of their Time in giving Children an Idea of the Supreme Being, ſuitable to their Underſtanding; and as far as their little Capacities will admit, inſtruct and inculcate the Principles of moral and Chriſtian Duties: On the contrary, the Generality of Parents, ſeem to think they have ſufficiently diſcharged their religious Duty, if they are careful their Children are taught to repeat the Duties the Catechiſm contains; and in the ſame Manner ſay over a Set of Words, entitled, *Prayers for Children*; which they neither do nor can underſtand, at the Age they are taught them; and which I can't but conſider as great Impiety

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and Irreverence in both Parents and School-miſtreſſes, when they teach Children to ſpeak Words, they do not underſtand, to an Infinite Being; of which they, at the Time they are taught them, can have no competent Knowledge, ſo as to enable them to addreſs Him at all; much leſs in the Terms commonly put into their Mouths. The Time I am confin'd to, would fail to enumerate every Inſtance the Generality of Parents are culpable in, with Reſpect to Injuries they inadvertently and inconſiderately do their Children, in their Infancy, &c. but I can't without a ſeeming Abſurdity, put them in Mind of the Juſtice they owe their Children, when, with Concern, I obſerve ſo many fail in the Juſtice they owe themſelves, by the apparent Neglect of their own Souls. I deſire them to permit me to recommend to each of their ſerious Conſiderations, the ineſtimable Worth and Value of your own immortal Souls, as well as thoſe of your Children: *For what is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall he give in Exchange for his Soul? No Man can give to God a Ranſom for it, ſeeing the Redemption is ſo precious, that it ceaſeth forever*, (Pſal. xlix. 7.) when once it is loſt. 'Twould be an inexpreſſible Happineſs, were every one ſenſible of this Truth; there would be then Hope that they would enter upon the great and neceſſary Work our Lord recommends; that is, 'Firſt that our own Tree be made good, and then the Fruit, it will neceſſarily produce, will be good alſo:' And when we find a Neceſſity of doing Juſtice

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to ourſelves, in the great Duty and Care of our Souls, we ſhall, I am certain, feel a very ſtrong and ſenſible Concern for the real Happineſs of our Offspring. Whether the Education I have been above deſcribing, is agreeable to Chriſtianity, I leave all Parents, in their ſerious Moments, to conſider; and proceed with a Remark on the Time called *Chriſtmaſs*; which being ſo lately obſerved here, occaſioned me to purſue a Reflection I have heretofore had at ſuch Seaſons. I ſhall firſt mention an Obſervation of *Alexander Cruden*'s, a Clergyman (if I miſtake not) After he has given us a Catalogue of the Feſtivals obſerved by the *Jews*, he adds; *In the Chriſtian Church, we have no Feſtivals that appear to have been inſtituted by* CHRIST *or his Apoſtles: Nevertheleſs Chriſtians have always celebrated the Memory of* CHRIST's *Reſurrection, and kept this Feaſt on every Firſt-day of the Week; which was called the Lord's-Day, ſo early as in St.* John's *Time: I was* (*ſays* John) *in the Spirit on the Lord's day.* However, I intend not here to enquire how, or when, this, or any other Feaſt, came to be introduc'd among Profeſſors of Chriſtianity; but only briefly to ſay, Thoſe who obſerve Days and Times, ſhould, as they profeſs, obſerve them to the Lord. You have a pretty large Account (in *Luke*) how the Birth of the holy Child JESUS, was uſhered in. *There were* (ſays he) *Shepherds abiding in the Fields of* Judea, *near unto the Town of* Bethlehem; *watching their Flocks by Night. And lo the Angel of God came upon them, and the Glory of the Lord ſhone round them; and*

they were sore afraid: And the Angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you glad Tidings of great Joy which shall be to all People: For unto you this Day is born, in the City of David, *a Saviour, which is called* CHRIST *the Lord. And suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of heavenly Hosts, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest! on Earth Peace, Good-will to Men! Then said the Shepherds, Let us now go to* Bethlehem, *and see the Thing which is now come to pass, and which the Lord hath made known unto us; and when they had seen the Child, they made known the Saying abroad, and they that heard, wondered at the Things that were told them by the Shepherds; who returned glorifying and praising God, for all the Things they had heard and seen, as it was told them by the Angel: And when eight Days were accomplished for the circumcising the Child, they called his Name* JESUS [a Saviour] *which was so named of the Angel before he was conceived in the Womb*; for this Reason, *because he shall save his People from their Sins.* Here are Glad-tidings of great Joy to all People, express'd with the greatest Solemnity; *For behold suddenly a great Multitude of heavenly Hosts appear'd with the Angel, praising God* for his Good-will to Men; by introducing the Means of Peace on Earth, as God is, in CHRIST reconciling the World unto Himself; and blotting out the *Hand-writing* that was against them, *nailing it to the Cross*; and putting Mankind into a Capacity of Salvation. And next good old *Simeon*, who it appears, had been waiting

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for the *Consolation of Israel*, celebrated the Birth of CHRIST on this wise, *Lord now lettest Thou thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the Face of all People: A Light to enlighten the* Gentiles; *and to be the Glory of thy People* Israel! Then *Anna* the Prophetess, coming into the Temple, *gave Thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of* CHRIST *to all them that looked for Redemption in* Israel. And next we may observe how the wise *Gentiles* behaved on this Occasion, when they came from the *East* to *Jerusalem*, twelve Days after the Birth of our Lord: These Men tho' they were *Heathens*, and considered Him as a temporal King (as well as a spiritual Saviour) yet approach Him with no loud and clamorous Acclamations of noisy and frantic Joy; no Drums, Trumpets, nor Fiddles; but when they came into the House and saw him, prostrating themselves, they worshipped him.

And now I would beg Leave to ask the Professors of Christianity, if they, on these Occasions, act consistently with themselves, who tell us their Times call'd Holy-days are more especially set apart for pious Purposes; are they then agreeable to this Design employ'd in an Enquiry, whether you have any rational Ground to hope you have an Interest in the Saviour, whose Birth you profess to commemorate? Do you examine whether your Practice keeps Pace with your Profession? Do you live a Life of Humility and Holiness, agreeable to the Example our holy Pattern recommends to our Imita-

tion; who was holy, harmleſs, and undefiled ſeparate from Sin, and Sinners? Or, on the contrary, are not theſe Times conſider'd, by moſt People, no otherwiſe than Seaſons of Mirth and Jollity? And, as ſuch, are they not chiefly ſpent, by Profeſſors themſelves, in Feaſting, and Dancing, Gaming, Jeſting and Wantonneſs; not conſidering the Work our Lord came to accompliſh, neither do they regard the Hand of Power that would ſave them! And among the inferior Claſs of People, what but one continued Scene of Drunkenneſs, Riot, Debauchery and Madneſs, appears to every common Obſerver? 'Twould be much more beneficial, *That the Husbandman ſhould till his Grounds, and the Artiſt follow'd or work'd at his Trade, than that they ſhould be thus idle, or, what is worſe, doing wickedly on theſe Occaſions, when, by Reaſon of wicked Works they crucify afreſh the Lord of Life and Glory, and put him to open Shame!* I would once more ask both Profeſſors and Prophane, whether Men, &c. in theſe Circumſtances, can poſſibly have any juſt Title to the ſacred Name of Chriſtianity, while they act in direct Oppoſition to the Nature of it? And whether this, and ſuch like Converſations, becomes the Goſpel of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST? Examine, I beſeech you, theſe Things ſeriouſly, and ſolidly; and I dare venture to ſay, you will find, with me (who was once in the Obſervation of Time, &c) that all ſuch Rejoicing is Evil; And that the appointed Faſts and Feaſts, in the Manner you obſerve them, are an Abomination to the Lord, yea his Soul loaths them!

I have before told you, that it was not my Intention to examine and consider every particular Transgression the Controversy of God is against, yet I shall briefly mention the Catalogue of Sins the Apostle *Paul* gives us, and which he says are the Fruits of the Flesh, and while People continue to produce such Fruit, they cannot possibly have an Entrance administer'd to them into the Kingdom of God, " Now, (says he) the Works of the " Flesh are manifest, which are These, Adul- " tery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviouf- " ness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, " Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, He- " resies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, " Revellings, and such like." And in 1 *Cor.* " vi. 10. he adds, " Theft, Covetousness, " Reviling, Extortion, &c. of which (says he) " I have told you in Time past, that they " which do such Things, shall not inherit the " Kingdom of God." And in the first of *Romans*, he describes such as did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, by these Marks or Characters " That they were fill'd with all " Unrighteousness, as Fornication, Wicked- " ness, Covetousness, Maliciousness, Full of " Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, " that they were Whisperers, Backbiters, Ha- " ters of God, Despiteful, proud Boasters, In- " ventors of evil Things, Disobedient to Pa- " rents, without Understanding, Covenant- " breakers, without natural Affection, impla- " cable and unmerciful." And to make the Contrast or Opposition of such Thing to the

Spirit

Spirit of Chriſtianity the more apparent and obvious, he immediately oppoſes the Works or Fruits, which the Spirit of CHRIST produces in his People, who follow its Leadings and Directions: "But the Fruit of the Spirit, "is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gen-"tleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Tem-"perance, *Galations* v. 22. And the Wiſdom "which is from above, (or from God) is firſt "pure, then peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be en-"treated, full of Mercy, and good Fruits, "without Partiality and without Hypocriſy, "*James* iii. 17." After the Apoſtle had been ennumerating the Sins of the Gentiles, &c. whch had been prevalent among them before their Converſion to the Chriſtian Faith; *Such* (ſays he) *in time paſt were ſome of you*; and he tells the Epheſians *you hath Chriſt quicken'd, who were dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*; *wherein, in Time paſt ye walked, according to the Courſe* (or Cuſtoms) *of this World, according to the Power of the Prince of the Air*; *the Spirit that worketh now in (the Hearts of) the Children of Diſobedience, among whom alſo we had our Converſation in the Luſts of our Fleſh*; *fulfilling the Deſires of the Fleſh, and of the Mind: But God, who is rich in Mercy, even when we were dead in Sin*, &c. *hath quicken'd us together in Chriſt Jeſus, and made us ſit together in heavenly Places.*"

And now it ſeems fit we ſhould examine how this great and glorious Work was brought about and effected, *viz.* by a Reſurrection from the Death of Sin to a Life of Righteouſneſs; which

which this ſame Apoſtle tells us, was (and is) done *by the waſhing of Regeneration and renewing* (Power) *of the Holy Ghoſt* (in the Heart) *But now are ye waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the Name of the Lord* JESUS, *and by the Spirit of our God.* Hence we may obſerve, that theſe Believers, who were in Time paſt Sinners, are now, by the ſanctifying Power of CHRIST, and Obedience to the Faith deliver'd, become Saints; agreeable to what the Apoſtle *Paul* writes to the Chriſtian Churches, *Your Bodies* (ſays he) *are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, which is in you,* 1 Cor. vi. 19. The *Epheſians* were *Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and Houſhold of God.* The Converſation of the *Philippians* was in Heaven. The *Colloſſians* were *deliver'd from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God.* The *Hebrews* were come *to the City of the living God; to the Heavenly Jeruſalem:* And the Apoſtle *Peter* tells the Churches, that they were *a choſen Generation, a royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People,* 1 Pet. ii. 9. *But is this the State of Chriſtians in our Age? Can we ſay that we are come to the heavenly* Jeruſalem, *where the great God is worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth? Or are we Strangers to thoſe Things, that they experienced; and yet perſuade ourſelves, that we are the People of God, and good Chriſtians. The primitive Churches had the honourable Title of Saints, we can give ourſelves no better Name than miſerable Sinners. And what is the Reaſon, that we are ſo much outdone by the Churches aforementioned; we can't conclude,*

that

that the Kingdom of CHRIST, *that then appear'd in Power, did, as the Sun in the Firmament ſometimes doth, ſhew itſelf in a Morning, and be no more ſeen all the Day; for the Kingdom of Chriſt is an everlaſting Kingdom, and his new Covenant an everlaſting Covenant. Neither can we conclude, that God hath withdrawn Himſelf from the Children of Men; for he never forſakes us, unleſs we forſake him; as the Clouds hinder, that we cannot at all Times of the Day ſee the Brightneſs of the Sun; ſo Iniquity hinders, that we do not remain ſenſible of the Preſence of God. The Apoſtle foreſaw, that there would be a falling away from the Grace in which many of the primitive Chriſtians were eſtabliſhed; and it ſoon after his Deceaſe came to paſs. But we ſay, that the dark Night of Apoſtacy is over, and we live in Goſpel-days again; if ſo, where are the Fruits? We may, I confeſs, hear Goſpel-Words; but where is the Goſpel Power, by which Believers come to be Sons of God; to bear his Image in Righteouſneſs? Why are not we, call'd Chriſtians, grown to the Stature of them that were the Children of* Heathens? *The Reaſon to me is this, we have not built upon the ſame Foundation: Thoſe built on the ſure Rock, and living Foundation, on CHRIST; as he, in all Ages, was, and ſtill is, in ſpiritual Appearance, the Light of the World, and the Life of Righteouſneſs; and taking his Eternal Spirit in themſelves for their Guide, turn'd from whatſoever they were reproved for. Thus their ſinful Deſires came to be mortified; and ſuch as were carnal came to be ſpiritual; and this made them a peculiar People. Did we walk in their Footſteps, we might riſe to their Attainments;*

ments; but if we build on Words, and outward Services, without Spirit and Life, we can never rise. For as Paul *said in another Case*, If I speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, &c. *So I say in this Case, if we hear Men and Angels; if we could live continually under the Sound of good Words, if we have no Regard to that inward Light, which discovers Evil, and gives Power to turn from it, we can never mortify Sin, cleanse our Souls, and become an holy People. The Work of Sanctification is inward in the Heart, and to be effected by inward Means: Nothing but inward Light can expel inward Darkness: Since Men fondly persuade themselves, that tho' they sow Tares, they shall reap Wheat; tho' they go down into the Grave Sinners, they shall rise Saints; and attain in another World what primitive Christians attain'd in this: Their Conversation hath not been in Heaven; but in Earth: They have walked in Darkness, and not in the Light; the God of this World hath been served, and not the God of Heaven.* And notwithstanding this is the unhappy and deplorable Circumstance of many of the Professors of this Age; yet from the Mouths of such, how frequently do we hear Exclamations and Complaints, against the daily Growth of *Infidelity* and *Deism!* never so much as imagining that they are any way accessary or instrumental to this Mischief; yet one great Cause thereof, I take to be, the irregular and unholy Lives of Professors. And till such can be perswaded, that a consistent Practice with the Religion they

profeſs, is abſolutely requiſite, to recommend the Chriſtian Religion; and till they produce the moſt convincing and prevailing Argument, *Example*, how can they hope or expect to be credited by this Infidel Race, which ſo much abounds; as every one muſt be ſenſible of the Difficulty of enforcing a Precept (tho' never ſo laudable in itſelf) in Words, which in our Lives and Practices we notoriouſly deny? Therefore the only Expedient that I know of, to ſtop the Mouths of Unbelievers, will be, *To ſhew forth your good Converſation in CHRIST JESUS, coupled with the Fear of God*; to *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they ſeeing your good Works, may glorify God, and be excited to follow your good Example.*

And now dear People, having, in a broken Manner, declared to you theſe Things which lay as a Weight on my Mind, there remains little but to propoſe to you, to try the Foundation of your Faith and Hope: Truth never loſes by Examination, but ſhines with greater Light and Splendor: Therefore, agreeable to the Apoſtle's Advice, "Examine yourſelves, whether you be of the (true) Faith; know you not your ſelves, how that CHRIST JESUS is in you, except you be Reprobates?" "That is, (ſays *Grotius*) Chriſtians in Name, and not in Deeds." Do not trifle, I beſeech you, in a Matter of ſuch Importance, as the future Well-being of your immortal Souls! To be miſtaken in this Point, will be of fatal Conſequence; Errors of this Sort being only to be rectify'd while we remain in this Life; for we

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are positively told, *That there is no Wisdom, nor Knowledge, Work, nor Device, in the Grave, whither we are all hastening.* And our Lord tells us, He wrought while it was Day, and excites us so to do, by saying, *The Night cometh wherein no Man can Work.* Let us therefore enquire whether our Faith is such an One as operates by Love: *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*, says our blessed Lord. Let us remember what Obstacles this true Faith removed for the primitive Christians, what Difficulties it enabled them to surmount. *Heb.* xi. "Without this Faith (in the Power of CHRIST) it is impossible to please God." "I will (says the Apostle *James*) shew thee my Faith by my Works; for as the Body, without the Spirit, is dead, so Faith, without Works, is dead also. Ye are my Friends (says CHRIST) if ye do whatsoever I command."

What will it avail us, tho' his outward Gospel be taught in our Land, if we do not obey his Law written in our Hearts, and conform to its Rule and Government. And tho' CHRIST our Lord is the Fountain to cleanse us from the Pollution of Sin; yet if we refuse to be purified by his spiritual Baptism; "If he wash us not, we can have no Part in Him," nor his Merits. And indeed my Friends, I have taken some Pains, by divine Assistance, to examine and enquire how I might have a well-grounded Hope to obtain Salvation, or, in other Words, eternal Life and Happiness. And in all my Enquiries and Researches, I have not been able to discover any other Way than this, which the

Almighty continues to direct Mankind in at this Day, as well as heretofore, " The Way of Holineſs thro' CHRIST," he being the Author of eternal Salvation to all Believers. " Be ye holy, as I the Lord your God am holy;" and " without Holineſs, no Man ſhall ſee the Lord:" And I find I can be made ſo no other Way, but thro' " Sanctification of the Spirit, unto the Obedience of Faith, and Sprinkling of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST." For every one who has, or can reaſonably have any Foundation of Hope to be ſaved by CHRIST's Life, Sufferings, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, and Mediation, muſt, by his Grace aſſiſting, purify himſelf, as he is pure; as no unclean Thing can poſſibly enter his holy Kingdom. And it is by his Grace we are ſaved, thro' Faith, operating by Love, " not of ourſelves, it is the Gift of God!" Thus, as I became obedient to the Teaching of this Grace received, I came to witneſs Mercy and Peace multiplied to me; for which, in great Reverence and Humility, I deſire always to bleſs God, the Father of our Lord JESUS, for His unſpeakable Gift! and for his abundant Mercy wherewith he hath viſited my Soul in his Day-ſpring from his high and holy Preſence; and afforded me a good Foundation to hope for his Salvation; and I deſire to give all the Glory to God, and to ſay, " Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy great Name and Power, be the Glory!" *Be ye holy*, is a Precept which contains no Myſtery; here is no *Enigma* to unriddle; no Need of Commentators; no Room for *Scepticiſm*, nor Con-

Controverſy; but a plain and poſitive Command, ſo legible, that he that runs may read; the Wayfaring Man, tho' a Fool (with reſpect to the Wiſdom of the World) cannot err here. Therefore ſuffer me to counſel you, to break off the Sin that you find eaſily beſet you, by Righteouſneſs; and your Iniquities by Amendment of Life; that ſo your Tranquility may be lengthened, and attend you beyond the Grave. And to you, as I have ſaid before, who may not charge yourſelves with groſs Immoralities, yet who prefer a Portion in this Life, to the durable Riches and Righteouſneſs in another; who ſay unto Gold, "Thou art my Hope, and make fine Gold your Confidence; who have forſaken God, the Fountain of living Waters, and hewn to yourſelves, Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns, that will hold no Water; who have changed the Glory of the incorruptible Being, and given it to your corruptible Things: Remember, God will not give his Glory to Idols, nor his Praiſe to your graven Images: Therefore keep yourſelves from Idols, and love not the World nor the Things of this World; for if any Man love the World (inordinately) the Love of the Father is not in him." And to you who are Lovers of Pleaſure, more than Lovers of God; who delight and place your Felicity in Grandeur, Pomp and Noiſe; conſider, I beſeech you, that all this will afford you no Comfort nor Satisfaction in a dying Moment; but, on the contrary, Remorſe and Sorrow: They will each one abandon you in your greateſt Extremities; and you will then ſee how you have been deluded and

miſtaken,

miſtaken, when the undeniable Meſſenger of Death lays his Arreſt upon you, and that important Hour aſſures you, that a few Moments will decide your Judgment, and caſt you either for eternal Bliſs or Miſery! Of what Eſteem then will be all your Pleaſures, and all your Toys? The greateſt and moſt exalted of all human Glory, "even Crowns themſelves will then be Toys." This then will be our Rejoicing, "The Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not by fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Converſation in this World, 2 *Cor.* i. 12." And when we look back, and make our Appeal to God, as good King *Hezekiah* did on his Death-bed; "Remember now, O Lord, I "beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee "in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have "done that which is good in thy Sight." O happy State! O glorious Condition! May God of his infinite Mercy ſo incline your Hearts to keep his Commandments, that when the Time of your Diſſolution approaches, you may all die the Death of the Righteous, and that your latter End may be like his! On the contrary, how will the Wicked look back with Horror and Affright on a Life ſpent in open Defiance and Violation of God's Laws, or a total Neglect of and Indifference for them? What will appear in ſuch a melancholy Seaſon to ſuch as theſe, a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which will devour the Adverſaries of the Lord, whoſe Wrath will then be revealed in a more extraordinary Manner

ner againſt all Unrighteouſneſs and Ungodlineſs of Men. This will be a Day of Trial (*viz.* the Day of Death) which will come on all the Inhabitants of the Earth; wherein the Faces of the Unrighteous will gather Paleneſs. A Day of Trouble and Diſtreſs! A Day of Darkneſs and Gloomineſs! A Day of Awakening and Alarm! wherein neither Silver nor Gold ſhall be able to deliver! Conſider this in time, all you that forget God, leſt he *laugh at your Calamities, and mock when your Fear cometh.* But ſome may object, this is not always the unhappy Caſe and Situation of Sinners, who defer the Work of Repentance to a ſick or dying Bed; God is very merciful, and is he not always willing and ready to accept returning, repenting Sinners, tho' at the eleventh or laſt Hour? I ſhall reply in the Words of an Author known to ſome of you at leaſt; 'Death puts an End 'to our Day of Grace, and determines our fi-'nal State; then all Men muſt confeſs of what 'mighty Conſequence it is to die well; we can 'die but once, and if we miſcarry that once, 'we are undone forever!' And what conſidering Man would make ſuch dangerous Experiments as Sinners do every Day, when their Souls are the Price of the Experiment? Who would try how long Death will delay its coming! how long he may Sin on, without thinking of Death and Judgment? Whether Death will give him timely Notice to repent? Or whether God will give him Grace to repent? And if he does, who wou'd venture the Hazard of a Death-Bed Repentance? Whether after a long Life of

Sin

Sin and Wickedneſs, a few diſtracted, confuſed and almoſt deſpairing Sighs and Groans will carry him to Heaven, and commute for what ought to have been the Work and Buſineſs of our whole Lives, *viz.* a Preparation for Death: If ſuch could after they have diſcover'd their Miſtake and Folly return and live over their Lives again, the Hazard were not ſo great; but this is an Experiment not to be twice made. If they Sin on till they harden themſelves in Sin, and are forſaken of the Grace of God; if Death come long before they expected, and cut them off by Surprize, and without Warning; if their dying and deſpairing Agonies and Horrors, ſhould not prove a godly Sorrow, nor that Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of, they are loſt to Eternity! And what Man in his Senſes wou'd expoſe his Soul to ſuch a Hazard as this? Who wou'd not take Care to make his Calling and Election ſure, before Death comes, and in a Matter of ſuch great Concernment (wherein one Miſcarriage is irreparable) to prevent Danger at a Diſtance. Some Men talk of Death, as if it were a Thing that could be done in two or three Days, and that the proper Time of doing it was a little before they die. But I know of no other Preparation for Death, but living well, which is the only ſure Evidence for Heaven. Men may cheat themſelves with vain Hopes and Imaginations when they come to die; but nothing will be a ſolid Foundation for Peace, but an univerſal Righteouſneſs.

Therefore I entreat you, the Inhabitants of this Place, to diſabuſe yourſelves; don't ſell your

your Birthright on ſuch diſadvantageous Terms; nor barter eternal Felicity for momentary Pleaſure; give not Sleep to your Eyes, nor Slumber to your Eye-lids, till you are become fit Temples for the mighty God of *Jacob* to dwell in! Bring Preſents to God (who ought to be fear'd) even the Preſents of humble and penitent Hearts; the Lord calls for your Hearts, not for your Lip-Service; *My Son, give me thy Heart*; *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates; even lift up the everlaſting Doors of your Hearts, and the King of Glory will come in, and dwell with you, and you with Him.*

And now ſuffer me to remind you, that you no longer deſpiſe the Riches of God's Goodneſs and Mercy, ſince his Long-ſuffering and Forbearance is deſign'd to lead to Repentance. By the Mercies of God I beſeech you, that you preſent yourſelves a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is but your reaſonable Service. And be not conformable to this evil World, but be transform'd, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect Will of God concerning you; which is no leſs than your Sanctification. And now I think fit to obſerve to you, that while almoſt all *Europe*, and even the Dominions of the King to whom you are Subject, are unhappily engaged and involved in the miſerable and deplorable Conſequences of a cruel and bloody War, you have enjoyed unmoleſted Tranquility, your Rights at home have not yet been invaded by your Enemies; indeed your Properties at Sea have ſometimes been wreſted from you by un-

reasonable Men; but what is that Evil compared with the Calamities and Distresses Thousands in *Great-Britain* and elsewhere have felt and suffered; Fire, Sword, Rapine and Plunder, desolate Widows, and distressed and fatherless Children, have been the dismal Effects of these unhappy Disputes and Differences between the Powers of *Europe*. 'And cannot we yet discover 'a Providence in all this Destruction, which is 'suffered to prevail among Men Are we not yet 'convinced that there is a God of Justice that 'rules in the Kingdoms of the Earth, and that 'he is about to take Vengeance on the Na-'tions and Families that call not upon his Name 'in Truth and Righteousness.' What greater Inducement can I propose to you to turn and love God, than his manifold Mercies? Do not you think they call for your Gratitude? He allures you by his Favours; he gives you Corn, Wine, and Oil; he gives you Vine-yards and Olive-yards, or at least the Means of procuring them; he draws with the Cords and Bands of his Love; he would take you by the Hand, and would heal you; he would take the Yoke of hard Servitude from off your Necks; and, if you are but willing to part with your Idols, he is ready to take the very Names of them out of your Mouths, and to betroth you to himself in Righteousness, Loving-kindness and Mercy. Tho' the whole Head be sick, and the whole Heart faint; tho' your Soul's Enemy may have wounded and left you half dead; yet there is Balm in *Gilead*; there is a Physician there, who offers you his Aid, and is willing

to

to recover you from your moral and ſpiritual Diſorders. And tho' you may be never ſo great Prodigals, if you have not ſinned out the Day of his Grace, Reſolve upon returning, and the heavenly Father is ready, on your unfeigned Repentance, to receive you into the Arms of his Mercy, and to put on you the beſt Robe you ever wore, even that of his own Righteouſneſs. Thus having briefly obſerved, how greatly we are indebted to the Almighty, for his manifold Mercies; I would wiſh you to examine what Returns of Love and Gratitude you have made; for remember tho' God bears long, yet he will not always bear; but expects that we ſhould not only praiſe Him with our Lips, but with our Lives alſo: Turn then, I beſeech you, to God, while he viſits you in Mercy; for unto his Power ſhall every Tongue confeſs, and every Knee bow, either in Mercy or in Judgment.

I have ſometimes thought it would be of ſingular Advantage to Profeſſors of Chriſtianity of all Denominations, ſeriouſly to examine and enquire of your own Hearts, what our Religion has done for us; or what Benefits have accrued to us from it? Whether the Grace we have received has aſſiſted us to reſiſt the Temptations of our Soul's Adverſary; and whether we are nearer Salvation than when we firſt believed? For a being inveſted with a Power to do a Thing, will no longer be of Uſe to us than as we apply it. The Grace and good Spirit, tho' it inſtruct us to deny all Ungodlineſs, is of no further Benefit to us, but as we obey its Teach-

ings, and follow its Leadings; therefore I am of Opinion it would not hurt the best Christians, nor any others, sometimes to ask themselves the following Questions: Have I witness'd the strong Man armed cast out of my Heart, and his Goods spoil'd, and a stronger than he in Possession? Have I who assume the Name of a Christian departed from all Iniquity? Are all old things done away (*for he that is in CHRIST is a new Creature*) and do I experience new Thoughts, new Desires, new Conversation, a total Change, all Things become regular, uniform and consistent with my high and holy Calling? Is CHRIST the best beloved of my Soul? Does my Heart pant and mine Eyes fail for his Salvation? Is my Soul athirst for God? Do I long for his Presence more than for hidden Treasure? Do I love God above all other Considerations (and my Neighbour as myself?) Am I careful lest I offend him? Do I live in constant Observance of his Laws, do I live in his Fear? Am I circumspect in all my Words, that I sin not with my Tongue? Does my Conversation become the Gospel of CHRIST? And am I careful to adorn his Doctrines, which I profess to believe and be guided by? If upon a candid Examination, this be the happy State of Professors of Christianity, my Soul can rejoice with them, let them call themselves by what Denomination or Sect they may: For happy is the People who are in such a Case! yea blessed are they whose Portion is the God of *Jacob!* On the contrary, if we are only professing, and not in the Possession of Godliness; if we have a

Form,

Form, but are insensible of the Power to work a Change in our Hearts; our Religion as yet, has done nothing for us; therefore I entreat all who are in this Case, to consider, 'tis an unfit State for Heaven; for if we have not witnessed a being created anew in CHRIST JESUS; born of the incorruptible Seed and Word of God; known a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness; born again of the Spirit; our Lord positively says, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Let the Time past then suffice; and for the future redouble your Diligence; and no longer hold the Truth in Unrighteousness, walk circumspectly as wise, redeeming the Time. The Kingdom of God does not stand in Form, but in Power, neither is Religion to be taken up by Fits and Starts, as it suits our Leisure and Conveniency; nor by Imitation, but Conviction, we must cleave to God, with full Purpose of Heart; what our Hand finds necessary to do in this great Business of Salvation, we must do it with all our Might; we must not indolently seek, but (by God's Assistance) ardently strive to enter the Kingdom of God. Our Talent must gain another Talent; lest as the unprofitable Servant was, we be deprived of that which we have received. False Pretences to Religion, and a bare Belief of the Truths of the Gospel, will be of no Advantage to us: Crying Lord, Lord, will not avail if we do not the Things which his Precepts enjoin: No Man can truly call CHRIST Lord, but such as witness his Rule and Dominion in their Heart, bringing them into Subjection

jection to his Power: Not the Hearers of the Law, but the Doers, shall be justified: Not he that hears CHRIST's Saying, but he that doth them, is accepted. On a memorable Occasion the sacred History informs us, the Almighty heard the Voice of the Children of *Israel*'s Words, when they spake to *Moses*, and he tells him that the People had well said all that they had spoken, but knowing the Insincerity and Inconstancy of their Hearts, he saith, 'O! that 'there were such an Heart in them, that they 'would fear before me, and keep my Command-'ments always, that it may be well with them 'and their Children forever!' Religion is an Heart Work, it must be begun, and carried on and compleated there: Nothing but keeping God's Commandments will entitle us to his Favour: Nothing short of having discharged our Parts in the Christian Warfare, and obtained a Victory over Sin, will entitle us to a Crown of Glory: Nothing less than being true and faithful Members of CHRIST's Church Militant here on Earth, will ever admit us Members of his Church triumphant in the Heavens. 'Tis to those that overcome that our Lord will give to sit with him in his Throne; even as he overcame, and is set down with his Father in his Throne. A being convinc'd in our Judgments of God's Goodness, &c. and that his Laws are righteous altogether, and therefore we ought to obey them, is not Conversion. Faith is not Practice; therefore *add to your Faith Virtue, to Virtue Knowledge, to Knowleage Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godliness, to God-*

Godlineſs Brotherly Kindneſs, and to Brotherly Kindneſs Charity.

Thus my dear Friends and Neighbours, I have declar'd in great Truth and Sincerity, my earneſt Concern and Deſire for the real Happineſs of the Inhabitants of my native Country in general; and having an eſpecial and peculiar Regard for many that I have known for a Series of Years, when I have reflected on the bare Poſſibility of your miſſing Heaven and Happineſs thro' Inadvertency, Inconſideration, and an inordinate Love for the Things of this Life, it has been Subject of Mourning to me; and eſpecially as I have thro' Mercy ſeen, that when I was in the like Situation, how dangerous a One it was, and that all who are in this unhappy Caſe, ſtand indeed in ſlippery Places. And many a Time has my Soul grieved ſecretly, when I have obſerved the Purſuits of ſuch, how earneſtly they are running after Vanities, and purſuing Lies (which will indeed deceive) and turning their Backs on God's Offers of Love, and refuſe to let him put his Beauty on them, and to make them glorious within; and ſince I have witneſſed the great Diſproportion between the Love of God, and the Love of the World, I am the more earneſtly concern'd to invite you to come taſte and ſee of the Goodneſs of the Lord; O make but Trial of his Love, and you'll ſay the one half was not told you. Then will you find the moſt exalted Happineſs this World can yield, will be nothing, and Vanity, yea, lighter than Vanity; but were you once in Poſſeſſion of the Love of God, you'd be

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ſenſible that you inherited Subſtance, ſubſtantial Joys, unſpeakable Delight, Satisfaction and Peace. O! that this unutterable Love of God might be once impreſs'd and engraven on your Hearts; Then would you confeſs with me, that one Day in his Courts, Preſence and Favour, is better than a thouſand ſpent in the Enjoyment of earthly Delights and Pleaſures. But now I would ſtop a while, and ask, If you have not been cheated by deluſive Hopes and Promiſes of obtaining Satisfaction from temporal Enjoyments? Have you never diſcover'd their Fallacy? Have they not vaniſhed into Air, even when you fancy'd yourſelves juſt in Poſſeſſion? And don't you find they leave you diſſatisfied and uneaſy? I am certain this is the Caſe with many; you ſtill feel a painful Vacancy, even in the midſt of your ſenſual Delights and temporal Enjoyments; which, be aſſured (I ſpeak by happy tho' ſhort Experience) nothing ſhort of the Approbation and Favour of God, and a Poſſeſſion of his Love and Peace, can ever poſſibly ſatisfy. I have told you already, that I have felt great Trouble and Anxiety of Mind on your Account; but tho' my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears; and cou'd I, or any one elſe, weep continually Day and Night for you, that you may reſt in the Day of Trouble; yet another's Concern cannot do this great Work for you, without your own Hand in the Buſineſs which relates to your Soul's Happineſs; ſince an inſpired Apoſtle aſſures you, you muſt, by Divine Aſſiſtance, "work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trem-

Trembling:" For no Man can redeem his Brother, nor give to God a Ranſom for his Soul. I may (as I do earneſtly) deſire your Happineſs, but I can't procure it for you. I may wiſh you Heaven, but I can't obtain it for you: Yet I earneſtly pray, *That the God and Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST may give unto you the Spirit of Wiſdom, and Revelation of the Knowledge of himſelf, whom* (rightly) *to know is eternal Life*; that the Eyes of your Underſtanding may be enlighten'd, and that *you may know what is the Hope of his Calling*; *and the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints*, and what the exceeding Greatneſs of his Power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power, by which he has vanquiſhed and brought down all the ſtrong Holds of Sin and Satan in the Hearts of them who confide in his mighty Arm, which is now extended over you for Good; God has viſited and called you often, and now waits to be gracious to you: The Almighty I ſay, has long viſited and try'd you by his Mercy and Forbearance; He has ſpoke to you by the Voice of his Holy Spirit, which ſome of you have neglected, overlooked and quenched: Hath not Wiſdom long utter'd her Voice, even at your Doors? Is ſhe not come up into your Chambers? Does not Underſtanding cry in the moſt ſecret Receſſes of your Conſciences, ſaying, *How long, ye ſimple Ones, will you love Simplicity, and Scorners delight in Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge? Turn you therefore at the Reproofs of Inſtruction, which is the Way to Life*;

and then behold he will more abundantly pour out of his Spirit upon you; and if ye hearken and obey his Voice, he will make his Words and Will known to you; on the contrary, if you continue to refuse and rebel against his Light and Truth in your inward Parts, the Consequence is sure, He will certainly forsake and leave you to your own Deluſions; because he hath call'd, and you refused; he hath stretched forth his Hand, and no Man regards; but have set at nought all his Counsel, turn'd his Word behind your Backs, and will hear none of his Reproofs. Therefore unless you return and repent, with all your Hearts, and amend your Ways and your Doings, he will, when your Distress comes upon you, laugh at your Calamities, have you in Derision, and mock at all your Fears.

But I fervently pray, that this may never be your deplorable Condition; but that you may be, not only the Visited, but the Redeemed of the Lord; not only the Called, but the Chosen of God! And, in order to make your Calling and Election sure, take to yourselves the whole Armour of God, that you may stand against the Wiles of the Enemy of your Soul's Happiness; *Having your Loins girt about with Truth, and having on the Breast-plate of Righteousness, and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel; but, above all, taking the Shield of Faith, whereby you'll be able to withstand and quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked One; and take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word*

(of

(or Power) *of God.* Finally, *Whatſoever Things are true, whatſoever Things are honeſt, whatſoever Things are juſt, whatſoever Things are lovely, whatſoever Things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praiſe; think on theſe Things and practiſe them. But we muſt remember, in all theſe Things, that God be our* Alpha *and* Omega: *His Love muſt be the Motive, and His Honour the End of all our Actions; and then the God of Peace will be with us, and bleſs us. To Him, and to the Word of his Grace, I commit and commend you; aſſuring you, my dear Fellow-mortals, that my fervent Deſire and unfeigned Prayer, unto the God of my Life, for you all, is, that you may be ſaved!*

SOPHIA HUME.

Charles-Town, in *South-Carolina,* the 30th, of the *Tenth Month,* 1747.

DIVINE LOVE

COMMEMORATED.

The AUTHOR unknown to me.

WHO can fathom the redeeming
Act of univerſal Love?
Human Thought, though ever teeming,
Yet will inſufficient prove.

Holy Angels, ever lauding
Of the great and wond'rous Scheme,
Seraphs, hymning and applauding,
Never can exhauſt the Theme.

O! the Height and Depth! ſurprizing!
O! the Length and Breadth, how great?
Generations paſt, and riſing,
Will the Bliſs participate.

Sure the Father's Love was burning
To poor loſt and helpleſs Man,
Anxious for his ſafe returning,
Laid the medi'torial Plan.

Nor leſs was our Saviour's Merit,
Who ſevere Obedience paid,
Dy'd, to obtain the Holy Spirit,
For his Creatures Help and Aid.

Now,

Now, above, makes Interceſſion,
That the penitential Mind,
Who makes unreſerv'd Confeſſion,
And reforms, may Pardon find.

Wretched Man, if ſuch Careſſing
Work not on thy brutal Heart;
If thou ſpurn'ſt the heav'nly Bleſſing,
Thou wilt not in it have Part.

Blame thy Conduct, charge not Heaven,
On thy Head thy Blood will lie:
Every Help to thee is given
Suiting Man's free Agency.

Do not, for a Moment's Pleaſure,
Forfeit this thy dear-bought Right
To the Joy and endleſs Treaſure,
Which the Goſpel brought to Light.

Uſe thy Reaſon, Grace aſſiſting
Every Faculty within;
Thou ſhalt know a brave reſiſting
All the deadly Powers of Sin.

Taſte Religion's chaſte Embraces,
Faith with genuine Works adorn;
Virtue has eternal Graces,
Freſh and blooming ev'ry Morn.

All her Joys beyond expreſſing,
Peace that yields a golden Crop;
She's in Life the choiceſt Bleſſing,
And in Death the grateful Drop.

Wing thy Soul, and qualify her
For the Converſe held above;
Tip thy Tongue, to join the Choir
In melodious Strains of Love.

Utterly diſclaiming Merit;
Praiſe the Father and the Son,
Jointly with the Holy Spirit,
An Eternal Three in One!

FINIS.

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